THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

FEBRUARY 1964

Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

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ERNST FISCHER — ART AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

M. A. COHEN — SOME THOUGHTS ON BRITISH POETRY TODAY

DISCUSSION:

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Monthly 2/-

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Marxism Today

Vol. 8 No. 2

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Subscription rates
Six issues 13s. 6d.
Twelve issues 27s.

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Editorial Comments

FROM time to time, and for different and devious reasons, truth spills over into the columns of *The Times*. We would draw the attention of readers to a letter to that journal from Mr. John I. Snyder, President and Chairman of the Board of U.S. Industries Inc.[1]

"Inevitably," writes Mr. Snyder,

> "expanding automation means contracting labour requirements. This has been irrefutably demonstrated in the United States."

This same gentleman, who manufactures automated equipment, recently told a U.S. Senate Labor Sub-Committee that automation in the United States is eliminating 40,000 jobs a week. This means around 2 million jobs per year.

American tycoons are notoriously franker than their more cunning British counterparts. U.S. Secretary of Labor, Wirtz, in his address to the last A.F.L.-C.I.O. Convention, prophetically proclaimed that

> "most of the work that has been done by people with less than a high school education can now be done more cheaply by machines".[2]

Automation in Britain

What of Britain? One thing is certain. After several rather quiet years, automation is visibly spreading. We would, in this connection, recommend to our readers the examination in last December's *Labour Research*[3] of this problem.

The question is posed as to why the spread in Britain, even though it is less rapid than that in the U.S.A. The *Labour Research* study sees, on the one hand, that "the competitive drive to secure as large a share of the market as possible leads to automation in some industries". On the other, it considers that automation necessarily leads to further automation:

> "An automatic machine demands automatic feeding; a faster-running automatic process makes manual measuring impossible; automation in the motor industries has begun to produce automation in the foundries. Again the search of the computer industry . . . for work is becoming a factor."

The study examines the process of developing automation in different British industries—oil, chemicals, steel, engineering, furniture, tobacco, shipping, printing, coal, cotton, etc. It shows, as we have already had occasion to stress in these columns, that automation is by no means confined to the great basic industries, but is spreading fast in the "white collar areas", banks, accountants, offices of every sort. In the Post Office, telephone operations will soon be fully automatic. Offices, in fact, are particularly affected:

> "The effects are being felt here before they become obvious in most of industry. Government Departments, banks, nationalised industries, industrial and commercial firms are using computers for payroll calculations, accounts, stocktaking and, more rarely, to help management take decisions. The National Coal Board, for instance, is introducing electronics data processing for wages calculation, sales and purchasing accounts and costing."

The Fruits

What are the fruits of this still early stage of British automation?

One, noted by *Labour Research*, is that its high cost and greatly increased output inevitably accelerates the trend to monopoly. A second, is the undermining of a number of traditional craft industries.

But, above all, *under capitalism*, the spread of automation threatens employment and demands constant vigilance and struggle by the trade unions so that no automation measures can be used to depress living standards.

On this subject there is a vast difference between the humbugging hypocrisy of British capitalism and the franker approach of the American tycoons. Lord Hailsham (as he was then) told a Conference on automation at Harrogate in 1961:

> "The end will be, not less opportunities for skilled employment, but more; not a threat to labour, but an enhancement of its status. This, oddly enough, is the result of all labour-saving devices."[4]

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[1] *The Times*, 27.12.63.

[2] Quoted by Labor Research Association—New York—*Economic Notes*, December 1963.

[3] *Labour Research*, London, December 1963, pp. 181-185.

[4] *BCAC Record*, 1961-62 (British Conference on Automation and Computation) quoted by *Labour Research*, December 1963.

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Oddly enough, in the U.S.A. where the experience of automation is so much more advanced, the result is precisely the opposite of Mr. Hogg's promise. Mr. John I. Snyder declares that the idea that automation creates jobs is a "myth":

> "Today Detroit is one of the centres of automation and it is also one of our country's largest and most critical areas of unemployment. In Detroit, at least, automation has not created jobs."

All of which is a permanent and powerful argument not only for increasing the strength of the trade unions *now*, under capitalism, but above all, for a new *socialist* organisation of society where machines serve men rather than men serving profits.

Death of Erich Ollenhauer

Erich Ollenhauer, Chairman of the Socialist International and Chairman of the S.P.D. (West German Social-Democratic Party) has died at the age of 62.

He entered politics at an early age and rose to become leader of the German social-democratic youth, a position he held for many years. A right-winger, he stood against any form of unity. After the Second World War, following the death of Karl Schumacher, Ollenhauer took over the leadership of the S.P.D.

It was under his leadership that the S.P.D. threw off all pretence at being a Marxist Party. At its 1959 Congress at Bad Godesberg, the S.P.D. adopted the revisionist programme which finally turned it into the respectable, petty-bourgeois party which it is today, aiming at winning the middle-class vote. It dropped all opposition to German rearmament as well as to Adenauer's foreign and defence policies. From then on the S.P.D. avoided the use of words like "Socialism" and "nationalisation" in its programme statements.

During the later years of his life, Ollenhauer moved over more towards the centre. He had more in common with Harold Wilson's proposals for solving the problems of Central Europe than with the views of his own extreme right-wing, led by men like Wehner and Erler.

There was a deep split between the Labour Party and the S.P.D.—on such questions as the Oder-Neisse Line, recognition of the German Democratic Republic, etc.—and Ollenhauer strongly supported the proposal, made at the 1963 Amsterdam Congress of the Socialist International, to create a joint Labour Party-S.P.D. Committee to discuss the matters which divided the two parties.

Need There be Need?

At a time when on hoardings and in schools people and children have been asked to contribute generously to Oxfam, *Science for Peace* have issued a most valuable pamphlet entitled *Need there be Need?* This is a reproduction of a speech by Professor J. D. Bernal which he delivered at the Student Christian Movement's Conference at Bristol in January 1963.

Professor Bernal, who is Chairman of the Presiding Committee of the World Peace Council, naturally enough places right at the beginning of his booklet the struggle for disarmament as one of the essential things that must be done in order to eliminate poverty in the world. He points out that:

> "The amount of money spent on armaments today is equal to the total national income . . . of the combined continents of Asia, Africa and South and Central America. If you want the figures, arms now cost about $120 billion a year, while the incomes of these continents are $60, $20 and $30 billion respectively. In other words, *if* the money was not spent on arms, and *if*—and this is a somewhat basic *if*—instead of spending it on arms it was spent on helping the people in the poorer continents, then it would mean an immediate doubling of their standard of living."

Professor Bernal is careful to add that he is not suggesting that this is how the problem should be tackled, but that it indicates the scale of the problem and the basis on which it could be solved.

In a most refreshing and vivid way he shows how through the proper use of the abundant energies we have in the world, the utilisation of the new electronic devices, the proper application of our scientific knowledge and the industrialisation of economically developed countries, poverty could be overcome and adequate food supplied for all people.

He stresses that from a material standpoint and from the point of view of knowledge, man should now be able to solve this big problem of human need.

> "Now, all scarcity—and this is really the most important thing—all scarcity, all felt need in the world is henceforth due to human interference, human stupidity and human greed. The means are there, the knowledge is there, and what is needed is the will to apply it. The difficulty is a human difficulty and not a material difficulty."

In other words, the key question now facing mankind is not so much the acquisition of more knowledge and technique and knowhow, but rather the way society is organised and the use to which its resources are put.

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Encyclopaedia Africana

Before he died the late Dr. Du Bois, on the invitation of President Kwame Nkrumah, set in hand the cause which he had first conceived 60 years ago, and that is the compilation of an Encyclopaedia Africana. In his last years, as a citizen of Ghana, he was able to establish a Secretariat of talented people who have been working on the preparations for this ambitious project.

It is impossible in a short Editorial Note to do full justice to the comprehensive scope with which this whole Encyclopaedia is being planned, but we would like to give some indications of the main basis on which it is being prepared and the coverage of subjects and themes intended.

According to a report put out by the Secretariat of the Encyclopaedia Africana, setting out the first provisional ideas for the Encyclopaedia, the geographical scope will embrace the entire Continent of Africa, including Madagascar, and will in its own words be "unashamedly Afro-centric, but not indifferent to either the impact of the outside world upon Africa, or to the impact of Africa upon the outside world".

The Encyclopaedia will range from the pre-history of Africa right up to current political, economic and social developments. In contrast to the usual historical view of Africa, the Encyclopaedia will try to give full and ample scope to information concerning Africa and its peoples prior to the advent of European colonialism.

In addition to a whole number of different sections and themes, the Encyclopaedia plans to contain about 2,000 biographical entries averaging 500 words each, with a few extending to 1,500 words. This section alone will represent a total of about one million words. This may seem a lot to our readers, but the total number of words planned for the Encyclopaedia is ten million.

The aim is that there will be 16 volumes averaging 625 pages, bound in eight books (two volumes to a book), plus a ninth book (Volume XVII) which will constitute the index.

Approximately half of the first volume will be devoted to materials designed to give the reader a general understanding of the source and broad chronology of African history, and of the most significant features of that history. It will also contain a summary of the main contents of all the volumes of the Encyclopaedia.

The introductory materials will include a survey of the archaeological evidence, documentary sources, ethnographic and linguistic data, and oral sources on the basis of which the knowledge of African history is based. There will further be a series of articles which will present some of the main features of the whole span of African history. These will include special articles on the existing knowledge of African pre-history down to about the year 5000 B.C., Africa's place in the birth of world civilisation, Africa during the Middle Ages, the significance of the European trade in African slaves, Euro-African relations since the eighteenth century, the social and economic consequences of colonialism, the achievement of African liberation.

The Main Sections

After this introductory material, the remaining sections of the whole Encyclopaedia will be divided up under the following main subject divisions:

(1) **Arts and literature** under which the Encyclopaedia will cover music, carvings, figurines and sculpture, dance, drama and masks, architecture, painting, crafts, literature.

(2) **Economy and resources** which will cover agriculture, livestock, fish and forestry, minerals, mining and oil, manufacturing, trade, transport, communications, electricity and hydro-electric power, labour, capital, investments and banking and the state sector of the economy.

(3) **Education.**

(4) **Ethnic groups and languages.**

(5) **Health.**

(6) **History to 1900** which, in addition to dealing with a whole number of different themes and periods, will include special sections on each of the main regions of Africa.

(7) **History since 1900** which will deal with the colonial phase and the background of independence and present-day states.

(8) **Traditional social institutions, laws and customs,** which among other things will deal with political institutions, women and marriage, economic institutions, and beliefs.

It is clear from the foregoing that the project for an Encyclopaedia Africana is of historic importance and in a way can be compared to the great French Encyclopaedia.

Already there has been held a Conference in Accra to further the work of this Encyclopaedia Africana and the work on this historic project is now proceeding. A number of non-African scholars, historians, etc., are participating in the work on this Encyclopaedia, but in keeping with its whole aim of establishing the significant role played by the African people in the development of mankind, the main direction of the project is in the hands of African scholars.

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Theories of Surplus Value

This month Lawrence and Wishart are publishing the first volume of a complete English edition of Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value*. The whole occupies three volumes, and the translation of the other two is in progress. The first volume (of nearly 500 pages) was translated by Emile Burns, and printed by the Foreign Languages Publishing House of the U.S.S.R. in uniform format with the three volumes of *Capital*. The price is only 8s. 6d.

Marx left the copious manuscripts for this work with Engels, when he died, and it was intended by him as a fourth volume of *Capital*. It consists of an historical study of the development of political economy. This was to supplement the analysis made in *Capital* by a critique of the earlier and contemporary theories. But in the course of it Marx also further developed certain aspects of his own analysis—such as the definition of "productive" as distinct from "unproductive" labour, and the theory of capitalist crisis.

Engels succeeded in preparing for the press the second and third volumes of *Capital*. But he, too, died before he could prepare the *Theories of Surplus Value* for publication. The manuscripts were then edited by Karl Kautsky, and were published by Kautsky between 1905-10.

Kautsky, it seems, took a good many liberties with the text as Marx had left it. Mainly, he altered the order of presentation. But he also toned down certain passages where he thought Marx was too vehement in his expressions. For example, Marx had referred to certain bourgeois economists as "asses", but Kautsky changed this.

The present edition, of which we now have the first volume in English, was prepared by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow, and published in Russian in 1954. The English translation is, however, made from the authentic German edition published by Dietz Verlag, of Berlin. Marx's original arrangement and phraseology has been completely restored.

The first volume, now available, deals mainly with Adam Smith. But it also contains a good deal of material about some of Smith's precursors.

This is not the first time that some of this material has been available in English, however. In 1951 Lawrence and Wishart published, at 21s., a volume of *Selections* from the *Theories of Surplus Value*, translated by Emile Burns and G. Bonner, containing material on Adam Smith and his precursors, and on Ricardo and the theory of capitalist crisis (the latter comes into the second volume of the complete edition). This book is still on sale.

Lest we Forget

Those who have seen the remains of Auschwitz —Nazi concentration and extermination camp— will never forget the gas chambers nor the huge pitiless piles of property seized from the victims —clothes, shoes, dentures and human hair.

The story of fascist genocide—so terrible but so necessary to be kept in memory—is told by Ota Kraus and Erich Kulka who themselves survived many fascist prisons and five concentration camps including two years at Birkenau, Auschwitz. This book has just been translated from the Czech and published in the German Democratic Republic under the title of *Mass Death and Profit*.[5]

They tell first of the preparations for genocide, the spread of fascist racialist and anti-semitic propaganda. Then, in grim and documented detail, they tell of the mass extermination centres whose very names still carry with them the terror of all they stood for—Chelmo, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz.

Some of this is known in Britain. Some of it has never been known. Too much has been forgotten.

But never before has the *detailed* story been told of the profitability of fascist torture and genocide. To this the whole last part of the book is devoted, with its grim figures, directives, extracts from correspondence.

We see the profitability of the slave labour of the victims when they still lived. And then the profits of their murder! There were profits from the sale of their possessions—their clothes, shoes, dentures, spectacles, from the gold extracted from their teeth.

There were profits from human hair cut from the victim's head, experiments to increase its profitability and to find use for it in the armaments industry. There were profits from the bones of the victims, profits from making machines to crush their bones to be used as fertilisers, profits from making gas chambers and gas to use in them. There were even profits from the supply of the fat from human bodies for the manufacture of soap.

"War," Lenin once wrote, "is very terrible, but it is terribly profitable."[6]

What terror has capitalism devised so terrible that it has not been used as a source of profit?

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[5] Ota Kraus and Erich Kulka—*Massenmord und Profit*—Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1963.

[6] V. I. Lenin—*Notes for a Lecture on May 1st and War*, prepared April 1915. Published in *Collected Works*, 4th Russian edition, Vol. 36, p. 286.

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Manchester Martyrs

"And not for the land of their birth alone
Do they swing from yon beams of shame
But for every struggle the world has known,
Liberty's holy name;
For the striving Right against ruthless Might,
Wherever the bonds may bind
Young Allen, O'Brien and Larkin die
A ransom for all mankind."

They died—young Allen, O'Brien and William Larkin—on a British scaffold outside Salford Gaol on November 23rd, 1867.

They were accused of "murder of a police officer" when, allegedly, participating in the release from a police van of the two Fenian leaders Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy who had come over to Manchester to enlist support of the Irish in Lancashire for Irish freedom.

Few trials can have been carried on in a more prejudiced and hysterical atmosphere. When the prisoners were led in to the Court they were seen to be manacled, and Ernest Jones, one of the defence counsels (former Chartist leader) declared:

> "As a member of the Bar I decline to sit in any court where the police are allowed to override the magistrates or to lend themselves to such a violation of the courts of justice."

Despite the hysteria of the capitalist press, there was a strong campaign amidst radical and working-class circles for the release of the accused. The recently formed General Council of the First International was active, so were many British trade unions, Radical and Reform Clubs. Two of those condemned to die were reprieved, but three were hanged. After the execution, thousands gathered at Clerkenwell and Hyde Park, some carrying banners proclaiming "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn".

Frederick Engels, living in Manchester at the time, wrote:

> "All the Fenians lacked was martyrs. . . . Through the execution of these men the liberation of Kelly and Deasy has been made an act of heroism which will now be sung over the cradle of every Irish child. . . ."

This story of the Manchester Fenian Martyrs is vividly told in a small pamphlet just published by the Manchester Branch of the Connolly Association.[7] As the centenary year, 1967, draws near, it is an earnest wish, the pamphlet concludes, "that the occasion should see a rallying together of all who desire to achieve the aim for which Allen, Larkin and O'Brien died—a United Independent Ireland".

What was Feudalism?

Many of our readers will be familiar with the French Marxist journal, *Recherches Internationales,* of which we have written from time to time in these columns. It is a two-monthly with an international Advisory Board and its aim is to print not original articles but reproductions of already published material from all over the world. Each number is devoted to a special theme.

The latest issue[8] deals with feudalism, or rather, as it was necessary to limit its scope, to European feudalism. In a brief introduction the Editors summarise their basis of selection of material. They have chosen the various articles, they write, "with a view to showing how the method of historical and dialectical materialism aids the exploration and understanding of both the broad outlines and the specific details of the medieval world".

They have tried, in their choice, to reflect the many discussions among Marxists that have taken place in recent years including the Soviet discussions on the political economy of feudalism, the recent discussions amongst British Marxist historians about the stages of history, and some discussions that have taken place among French Marxists at the *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Marxistes.* They have also taken into account recent discoveries of documents and material including, amongst others, the "birch-bark Charters" dug up at Novgorod which throw much light on the situation of the Russian peasantry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The result is a number of great interest and diversity ranging from the origins of feudalism in France to the formation of the pre-feudal state in Germany, from early Portuguese class struggles to the evolution of feudal rent in England (this last by Kosminski the Soviet specialist on the early agrarian history of Britain).

The Editors have included the contributions of Eric Hobsbawm and Maurice Dobb on the transition from feudalism to capitalism which were published in *Marxism Today* at the end of 1962.

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[7] *James McGill & Tom Redwood—The Story of the Manchester Martyrs,* Connolly Association and Irish Self-Determination League, 6d.

[8] *Recherches Internationales,* numéro 37, *Le Féodalisme,* 10.50 francs. Available through Central Books or Collet's.

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Socialist Ideas in Africa

Idris Cox

WITHIN the past seven years the number of independent states in Africa has trebled. In 1957 there were only 10—following the achievement of independence by Kenya and Zanzibar in December 1963, there are now 34. With the exception of South Africa (which is "independent" only for the European minority) these independent states account for over 80 per cent of the African territory, and 85 per cent of its population.

This rapid change began with the achievement of independence by Ghana in March, 1957. By the end of 1960, 17 more African countries had won political independence. In the last three years seven more African countries have become independent, and Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia will follow suit in 1964, leaving only South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, and a few small colonies to win their freedom.

The newly independent states are still faced with big problems. Experience has proved that political independence alone cannot remove the heritage of colonialism. Moreover, imperialism finds new ways in which to tighten its economic grip, retain its political influence, and exercise its domination. The independent states will have to wage an ever sharper struggle against the strategy of neo-colonialism.

Next Steps

Dr. Nkrumah put this issue bluntly in the course of his speech at the Addis Ababa Conference of Heads of States in May, 1963, when he said:

> "Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believed that African Governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule. If, therefore, now that we are independent we allow the same conditions to exist that existed in colonial days, all the resentment which overthrew colonialism will be mobilised against us."

The timeliness of this warning was revealed soon after when President Abbé Youlou of the Republic of Congo (formerly French) was overthrown in August, 1963, and President Maga of Dahomey was forced to resign in October, 1963. In both cases the armed revolt against them was supported by the trade unions.

What is the next step forward for the independent African states? This is now the subject of intense discussion, not only in Africa, but in the new states in Asia, in the socialist world, and even in Britain.

Will the new African states take the path of capitalist development, or will they advance on the socialist road? Can they find a "neutral" road which is neither capitalist nor socialist?

Some of the new African states are only just emerging from tribal society, and are only in the earliest stage of building a new nation. Will they be able to "jump" stages of economic and social development and by-pass the path of capitalist development?

Is there a "new" path of development which is peculiar to African conditions?

First, on the prospects of capitalist development in the new African states. In most of them the economic grip of overseas monopoly firms is still strong. The aim of the imperialists was not to build up an independent and balanced national economy, but to extract the maximum amount of natural and mineral wealth, drain away colossal profits, and get the maximum benefit from the declining prices of raw materials and primary products in return for increasing prices for the capital and manufactured goods exported to these countries. This is still the aim, and practice, of imperialism.

Colonial rule has always been the biggest obstacle to the growth of an independent national economy. The acceptance of continued imperialist domination will not promote the economic development of the new African states. There is ample evidence in Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and even Nigeria, that only *after* achieving political independence has it been possible to embark upon the rapid growth of an independent and balanced national economy.

In any case, open advocacy of imperialist rule is no longer possible in Africa. It has become a "dirty word" among the mass of its peoples. Not only are they opposed to imperialism, but they are also opposed to the capitalist path of development. They are seeking a different road, and are convinced that Africa has something new to contribute to the world.

Capitalist development in Europe depended a good deal, and still does, on the exploitation of colonial resources, just as slavery in the southern

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states was a big factor in the growth of U.S. capitalism. The African national bourgeoisie (national capitalists) is still small, extremely weak and undeveloped, and scarcely exists as an organised class force. Apart from a few small factories it is engaged mainly in trade, generally taking second place to the big overseas monopoly firms. It has no colonial possessions and cannot embark upon colonial expansion. Even if it were possible to do so, it would be resisted even by the most politically backward of the African masses.

This makes clear that the "traditional" path of capitalist development is not possible in most parts of Africa. At the same time, there is some degree of capitalist development (mainly in South Africa, the Rhodesias, and the Congo), but in most countries of tropical Africa industrial development is based more and more on the public sector rather than the private sector, and agricultural production is based more and more on co-operative methods.

Varieties of "Socialism"

What prospects are there of an advance towards socialism?

Most African national leaders proclaim that socialism is their aim. To advocate the growth of capitalism would seriously weaken (or even completely destroy) their political influence among the masses. Socialism is the new gospel to win the support of the African peoples.

The great socialist advances of the Soviet Union, its firm stand for world peace and its gigantic support for all national liberation struggles, are making a powerful impact throughout Africa. Emerging from their first stage of political liberation from imperialism the African peoples are inspired by the socialist world to look forward to the new stage—complete liberation from all forms of colonialist and imperialist domination, and the advance to socialism.

The African weekly journal *The Spark* (organ of the Bureau of African Affairs in Ghana) was bold enough to declare (22/12/62):

> "Like the rest of the world, the decisive influence of socialism is making itself felt in Africa. The growing appeal of socialist ideas is everywhere manifest. Africa is moving irresistibly to socialism."

African conditions, together with its class relations, are so different that socialism is interpreted in many different ways. In Africa the opposition to the path of traditional capitalist development in Western Europe is a strong and positive factor, but its negative aspect is the temptation to throw overboard all the positive lessons of the political struggles in other parts of the world.

It is argued that rival classes do not exist in African society. With the achievement of political independence (together with the absence of a *developed* national bourgeoisie) it is claimed that all Africans have common aims. It is argued that there are no rival classes, and so no need for rival political parties. This gives rise to the one-party system as a form of government in several independent African states.

This separation from the rest of the world, idealisation of traditional African society, blurring over of class differences, together with separate national ambitions of bourgeois elements, has led to a great variety of "socialist" concepts in Africa.

Thus, there is the "Arab socialism" of President Nasser, whereas in Tunis (another Arab country) there is "Neo-Destour socialism"—Neo-Destour being the name of the ruling party, meaning "new life". There is the "Negritude" preached by President Senghor of Senegal, often presented as a variety of "African socialism". The National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) presents the concept of "Pragmatic Socialism" (the old hand-to-mouth process) and the Action Group of Nigeria sets the aim of "Democratic Socialism"—much in the same way as the right-wing leaders in Britain.

Most widespread is the concept of "African Socialism"—something different from the Social Democratic concepts in the capitalist countries and also from the scientific socialism of Marxism in the socialist world. Even within the concept of "African Socialism" there are different varieties, ranging from the "tribal Socialism" of Julius Nyerere, President of Tanganyika, to the mixed economy "democratic socialism" presented by Jomo Kenyatta in the recent election programme of the Kenya African National Union.

Brockway's Views

Mr. Fenner Brockway, M.P., has a well-deserved record as a staunch opponent of colonialism, but has a curious conception of socialism. In his recent book *African Socialism*, he gives his own peculiar version of this proliferation of socialist concepts in Africa. He sums them up as "four trends in socialist theory".

> "Communism or Marxist-Leninism, African Marxism, African Pragmatic Socialism, and African Democratic Socialism" (p. 19).

Mr. Brockway expresses the view that the Marxist-Leninists are extremely weak because they "come into conflict with the general socialist flow in Africa because they insist that their 'scientific socialism' is authoritative under all conditions, and that its theory and method must be universally accepted" (p. 20).

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No proof is offered for this contention, and throughout his book there is the utmost confusion as between the *form* and *content* of socialism. On the political content of socialism Mr. Brockway is correct in asserting that Marxist-Leninists declare that:

> "There is no such thing, in their view, as distinctive African socialism any more than European, Asian or American socialism" (p. 20).

On the form of socialism, Mr. Brockway seems to be grossly misinformed when he explains:

> "The adaptation of the tribal system to complicated modern conditions presents, of course, enormous problems. It will mean, as all *except* the Marxist-Leninists realise, an African socialism different in many *forms* from either European social democracy or Soviet communism" (p. 26). [My emphasis.]

The basic attitude of the international Communist movement was presented in the 1960 Moscow Declaration of 81 Communist and Workers' Parties:

> "The *forms* and course of development of the socialist revolution will depend on the specific balance of class forces in the country concerned, on the organisation and maturity of the working class and its vanguard, and on the extent of resistance put up by the ruling classes."
> (36 *Million Communists Say*, p. 30.)

The real issue is not the form of socialism but its political *content*. To Mr. Brockway several African countries are already socialist, though the concept of socialism differs from one to the other. In his third chapter *The Socialist Sector of Africa* he includes the United Arab Republic, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Ghana, and Tanganyika. Even Dahomey is included, simply because the Minister of Commerce informed Mr. Brockway (when he touched down in Dahomey while travelling by air from Accra to Khartoum) that "the next stage of socialisation planned is to establish publicly-owned industries associated with agriculture" (p. 42).

Even before Mr. Brockway's book was published in November 1963, news had come through that President Maga of Dahomey had been deposed but retained in the Cabinet as a result of action taken by the armed forces—which are under French influence. True, the trade unions took a secondary part because of dissatisfaction, and this was exploited to bring about a Cabinet re-shuffle. Such is the "socialism" of Dahomey. Also in Senegal, during September and October 1963, there were large-scale strikes, with 50,000 demonstrating on September 27 outside President Senghor's palace. They broke down the prison gate and hundreds were arrested, but again on October 4, more than 50,000 filed past at the funeral of one of their leaders who had been killed. Surely it is a strange kind of socialism in Senegal!

Within Mr. Brockway's large compass of countries building "socialism" in Africa he includes Tunisia ("few African countries have gone further in socialist planning"), the "pragmatic" socialism of President Nasser, and the net is even cast outside Africa to include Israel which "is perhaps to a greater degree than any country a democratic socialist state" (p. 106). Based on all these varieties of "socialism" Mr. Brockway expresses the conviction that:

> "Indeed, it is not too much to say that the most dynamic socialist movement in the world today is in Africa" (p. 17).

Mr. Brockway can learn a great deal from the rising generation of socialists in Africa. Even a year ago this conglomeration of "socialist" concepts came under severe criticism in *The Spark*:

> "Socialist orientation does not mean preaching a hotch-potch of pragmatism-cum-humanism-cum-metaphysics plastered over with idiosyncrasies and passed over as African socialism. African socialism can mean no more than the basic tenets of socialism in an African setting." (December 29, 1962.)

In a subsequent editorial *The Spark* came out clearly for "scientific socialism" urging all Africans to "stop chasing illusions like African socialism, Arab socialism, pragmatic socialism, democratic socialism and such other beautiful phrases that cover up a multitude of anti-socialist sins" (25.10.63).

Senghor's Outlook

The hotch-potch of socialist ideas referred to is is not confined to Africa. When the Ba'athists in Iraq staged a successful counter-revolutionary coup in February 1963, Mr. Brockway wrote: "It is neutralist, Socialist, moved by Arab unity" (*Tribune*, 15.2.63). Even on the first day of this coup it was clear that this fascist gang had nothing in common with unity, democracy, or socialism, but simply used these phrases for their reactionary aims.

Let us examine these countless versions of "socialism" now being put forward by various African national leaders.

President Senghor is often acclaimed as the theoretician of "African Socialism". After three years of Senegal's "independence" he declared in 1961: "The French Community (continued relations with France) created by General de Gaulle with Africa's true representatives, is one of the

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greatest achievements of our time." In his book *West Africa in Evolution* he explains:

> "We aim to hold firmly to a middle-of-the-road socialism which is liberal and undoctrinaire —one which socialises all that should be socialised, beginning with the rural economy, but no more than that."

Among African leaders Senghor is the outstanding exponent of what is termed "Negritude". This is how he defined it in a lecture at Oxford University in October 1961:

> "Negritude is the whole complex of civilised values—cultural, economic, social and political —which characterises the black peoples, or, more precisely, the Negro-African world."
>
> (*West Africa*, 4/11/61.)

This excludes the Arab peoples of Africa, but includes the Negro peoples of the United States, the character of whose struggle is vastly different from that of the peoples of Africa. African liberation is presented as a clash of *colour* and *culture*, not a *political struggle*. Influenced by his Roman Catholic upbringing, Senghor surrounds his peculiar concepts with mystical illusions, completely devoid of any scientific analysis of the motive forces in history, not to mention the class forces within society. One of the commentators in *West Africa* (by no means a Marxist), bluntly described these devotees of "Negritude" as comprised of "Muslims, fetishists, hard-core Calvinists, diehard Papists, and renegade Marxists" (*West Africa*, 30/6/62).

Senghor asserts that "our Negro-African society is a classless society" and that the problem is "not how to put an end to the exploitation of man by his fellow, but how to prevent it happening". In the next breath he admits: " and yet we have not legally suppressed private capitalism, which is foreign to our country; we have not even nationalised anything" (*West Africa*, 11.11.61).

Despite Senghor, the fact remains that class differentiation in Senegal cannot be hidden. Not only has nothing been nationalised, but together with the Ivory Coast, Liberia and the Congo, it is more strongly in the economic and political grip of foreign imperialism than any other independent state south of the Sahara, with living standards far below Ghana's.

It is certainly not surprising that both Senghor and President Tubman of Liberia were honoured by the Queen early in 1963—alone among the non-British independent states in Africa.

In a recent statement made by President Modiba Keita of Mali, he declared:

> "We will not allow ourselves to be caught by the magic of words. Most of the states speak of African socialism—even Senghor speaks of African socialism. If we are not careful the word 'socialism' will be emptied of its meaning, and bourgeois systems of the most reactionary kind will be able to camouflage themselves under the sign of socialism."

Tribal Society and "Socialism"

Among the African national leaders with a far more consistent anti-imperialist record than Senghor is Julius Nyerere, President of Tanganyika. Not only in the struggle for political independence, but after its achievement, Nyerere has taken a principled stand against the vile apartheid system in South Africa (long before the Addis Ababa Conference in May 1963), and has put into practice effective steps to boycott trade, arms, and airspace with South Africa. Moreover, Tanganyika has become a haven for the leaders of illegal liberation movements in South Africa, South-West Africa, Angola, and Mozambique.

Though a staunch opponent of imperialism, Julius Nyerere is also overwhelmed by African "exceptionalism". His pamphlet *The Basis of African Socialism*, written in April, 1962, starts off with the assertion that "Socialism—like Democracy—is an attitude of mind". Socialism is not a "standard political pattern", and the basic difference between socialism and capitalism "does not lie in their methods of producing wealth, but in the way that wealth is distributed".

Nyerere's ideal, like Senghor's, is the "traditional African society where both rich and poor are completely secure", and this is the picture he paints of it:

> "Nobody starved, either of food or human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. That is socialism. There can be no such thing as acquisitive socialism, for that would be another contradiction in terms. Socialism is essentially distributive. Its concern is to see that those who sow reap a fair share of what they sow."

More than 120 years ago Karl Marx laid bare the fallacies of the utopian socialists and others who were blind to the class forces in society. Like Nyerere they believed that the equitable distribution of wealth could be separated from the *class* ownership of the means of production, and did not grasp that the *distribution* of wealth depends on which *class* in society owns the land, means of production, and the power to exploit labour.

At an early stage of capitalist development these utopian ideas are not unusual. In the section on "Critical—Utopian Socialism and Communism" in the *Communist Manifesto*, 1848, Marx pointed out:

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> "The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, cause Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to class antagonisms."

Wishful thinking will not eliminate class antagonism in Tanganyika. True, direct colonial rule has been abolished, but imperialism still retains its economic grip. Foreign monopoly firms still have a stranglehold on sisal (Tanganyika's main product) and make gigantic profits, many times bigger than the total wage-bill. Mr. Nailo Swai. Minister for Development and Planning, recently explained that "Investment in the private sector amounts to 60 per cent". (*Reporter*, 5.10.63). The official *Industrial Directory* of firms in 1961 (large and small) gives a total of 1,999 firms. Wage disputes and strikes among sisal workers are frequent, and have increased in recent years. There is certainly no semblance in this situation of depending "on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member".

Nyerere contrasts African "tribal socialism which knows nothing of class conflicts" with "European Socialism which was born of the Agrarian Revolution and the Industrial Revolution which followed it". He asserts that the former produced the "modern capitalist" and the latter "the industrial proletariat", and that these two revolutions "planted the seeds of conflict within society".

If the term "agrarian revolution" refers to the breakdown of feudalism it certainly ignores the basic factors responsible for this change. Even more misleading is the topsy-turvy view that it is revolutions which plant the seeds of conflict in society, rather than class conflicts creating revolutions.

In an attempt to justify the claim that classes do not exist in African society, Nyerere points out that the word "class" has no equivalent in any indigenous African language. Obviously, the word "class" appears nowhere in any tribal society in Africa or elsewhere, for classes only appear when tribal society breaks down. And there can be no doubt that tribal society is rapidly breaking down in Tanganyika.

Marxists have always been conscious of the positive as well as the negative aspects of tribal society. Contrary to Nyerere's idyllic picture, tribal society was essentially a primitive form of existence in which no surplus was produced above bare subsistence needs. There was no other way to live except by sharing things in common, and it was a community of *poverty*, not of wealth. At the same time, however, there was not an exploiting class, exercise of dictatorship, or political suppression.

Engels was fully conscious of these positive aspects of tribal society, and in his classic essay *Origin of the Family*, quoted with approval the perspective given by Lewis Morgan, in his authoritative survey *Ancient Society*:

> "Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges, and universal education, foreshadow the next higher plane of society to which experience, intelligence and knowledge are steadily tending. It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes."

Socialism is the transformation of the positive features of tribal society to the "higher plane of society". From a low level of existence new and higher relations will arise from the mastery of science and the laws of social development. The most positive features of primitive communism are transformed into scientific socialism, a stage to communism, and the pinnacle of human development.

Can the positive features of the old tribal society be preserved in the modern age during the transition from capitalism to socialism?

This depends on the speed with which Africa advances to socialism. As early as 1882, in his introduction to a new edition of the 1848 Communist Manifesto, Engels held out the prospect that the "mir" system in Tsarist Russia (under which more than half the land was owned in common by the peasants) might be preserved under certain conditions:

> "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a workers' revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of the land may then serve as the starting point for a communist development." (London, January 21, 1882.)

More than twenty years later, Lenin gave a clear analysis of the disintegration of the communal land system in Tsarist Russia and the creation of a new "peasant bourgeoisie" within the framework of the old feudal system. This was the situation confronting the 1917 Russian socialist revolution. It was not followed by victorious revolutions in the West, and for this failure, world humanity paid the price of the Second World War and faces now the threat of a terrible nuclear war.

One of the first decrees of the new Russia was to give land to the peasants, and at a later stage the elimination of the "kulak" (rich peasant) through the system of collective farming. It established common ownership of land throughout the whole of the Soviet Union. The building of

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socialism has transformed the old mir system from a community of poverty into a community of wealth, with advances in the field of science and technology which are the envy of the whole world.

In the light of its own specific conditions Tanganyika may take a different road to achieve these objectives—not back to "tribal socialism", but forward to co-operative and collective farms, mechanised agriculture, and scientific industrial development. This is the way forward to socialism.

Looking to the Past

Among the more recent exponents of "African Socialism" is Mr. Tom Mboya, General Secretary of the Kenya African National Union, and a Minister in the Government. Writing on this subject in March, 1963, he explains:

> "When I talk of 'African Socialism' I refer to those proven codes of conduct in the African societies which have, over the ages, conferred dignity on our people and afforded them security regardless of their station in life. I refer to universal charity which characterised our societies and I refer to the African thought processes and cosmological ideas, which regard man, not as a social means, but as an end and entity in the society." (*Transition,* Uganda magazine.)

In one respect Mboya differs from Nyerere when he admits that "poverty existed, but it was not due to man exploiting man". If his assertion is true that the peoples of Kenya have always had "security regardless of their station in life", one wonders what they have been fighting for all these years! Why have they waged a ceaseless struggle for many decades against European land robbery; organised innumerable strikes in the past forty years, and created trade unions and political movements to wage the fight for independence?

On July 24, 1962, the *Financial Times* estimated that there were 300,000 unemployed in Kenya, and Tom Mboya (who was then Minister of Labour) declared that 31,500 Africans had been thrown out of work in one year alone (ending in June 1961), and that "hungry men have to steal in order to live" (*Times,* July 19, 1962). Not much security there, and certainly no sign of a classless society!

When it comes down to brass tacks, Mboya himself advocates measures which are in striking contrast to the "communal" principles of traditional African society, proposing loans for local and foreign capitalists, and that the government should stimulate private investment. Mboya contrasts "African Socialism" with what he describes as "Socialism of the Western type" on the one hand, and "a Marxian type of Socialism" on the other. He makes a fervent plea: "Let us go abroad to ask for loans and technical skills, not for ideals and ideologies."

What is Mboya's concept of socialism? In one sense he expresses agreement with Nyerere in stating that: "Socialism is a mental conditioning or an attitude of mind established in order to achieve rational relationships and harmony in society." Any capitalist would agree with this vague general formula, even when he spells it out in more detail:

> "Socialism stands for equality of opportunity, security of income and employment, equality before the law, the rule of law, individual freedom, universal franchise, state regulation of economic life, state control of vital means of production and distribution. . . ." (*Transition,* March 1963.)

If the word "socialism" is left out, all supporters of the capitalist system will agree with these objectives. Even in *imperialist* Britain there is a considerable *state regulation* of economic life and *state control* of production and distribution.

What is Socialism?

Scientific socialism is not a concept limited to geographical boundaries, either "East" or "West". It is a universal concept of a new stage of society, applicable *anywhere* in the world, providing the objective and subjective factors have sufficiently matured to advance towards this new stage. It actually exists in one-third of the world, and as a political aim in most of the remaining two-thirds. Its basic tenets are *universal* in character, but the methods of reaching this stage and the application of its principles will be different in different parts of the world.

> "The term 'African' is used to cover up the fact that the 'Socialism' advocated is in reality a negation of socialism. It is used to flatter African intellectuals that the new ideology is of their own creation." (Julius Sago, *The Spark,* April 19, 1963.)

To speak and write of "African Socialism" makes no better sense than dividing the sciences into geographical compartments, e.g. African mathematics, African chemistry, African biology, or African physics. Science is universal, but its *application* differs according to different situations. There is only one socialism—scientific socialism—which belongs to the whole world, and not to one continent or one country. "African Socialism" is a mirage, but there can be different *roads* to Socialism arising from the different conditions in the African countries.

What are the basic tenets of socialism? Briefly, they are:

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(1) Common ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, and production for use, and not for private profit.

(2) Planned methods of production, based on harmonious relations between industry and agriculture, raising of living standards, and overcoming the inequality between town and country.

(3) Application of science to all spheres of production, unleashing the inventive genius of human beings, and to make machines the servants of men and women.

(4) Political power in the hands of the people, led by the working class and its Marxist party, and based on full democracy in all aspects of economic and social life.

(5) National sovereignty and friendship with all nations, based on internationalism and not narrow bourgeois nationalism.

(6) Equal rights for all men and women.

(7) Encouragement and promotion of young people to take key positions of leadership.

(8) Positive measures for the flourishing of the arts and sciences, for scientific and technical education, and for equal opportunities for every child to advance in all spheres of education.

There is nothing specifically Russian, German, French, British, or American about these basic tenets of socialism, and nothing in them which is "alien" to any African country. They represent a stage in the advance of human society which would end all forms of imperialist domination, all forms of economic exploitation, and all forms of inequality.

True, in the vastly different conditions of Africa the forms and methods of a socialist society cannot be an exact copy of the existing socialist countries. The existing class relations, communal land ownership, the sense of African unity, pride in African history and culture, will have to be taken into account.

Already, many of the independent African states have an expanding public sector of production, village and peasant co-operatives, a growing number of collective farms, and even some state farms. Socialism will advance these progressive developments to a far higher stage.

In contrast to most African national leaders, Dr. Nkrumah has given a far clearer expression of the real content of socialism:

> "Socialist production is production of goods and services in fulfilment of the people's needs. It is not production for individual private profit. . . . Socialism is the only pattern that can within the shortest possible time bring the good life to the people. For socialism assumes the public ownership of the means of production—the land and its resources—and the use of these means of production that will bring benefit to the people." (*Address to the Accra Study Group*, CPP 22.4.61.)

Ghana has made big advances in its state sector of production. The properties of many overseas firms have been taken over or bought out. Co-operative farms have grown rapidly, and a number of state farms have been established. However, Dr. Nkrumah made it clear in this address that Ghana is not a socialist state, and that all talk of socialism is just empty words without basic industrialisation and agricultural production, and the expansion of socialist education. He went on to stress that:

> "We cannot build socialism without Socialists, and we must take positive steps to ensure that the party and the country produce the men and women who can handle a socialist programme."

The achievement of socialism is not only a matter of political theory and programmes, but also of class relations. Political independence was won by an alliance of class forces led by the progressive elements of the national bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, but workers and peasants were the biggest mass force.

Transition to Socialism

The new stage demands a sharper struggle to achieve economic independence and end all forms of imperialist domination. The more reactionary elements among the national bourgeoisie, including the African intelligentsia, show serious signs of wavering in this new phase of the struggle. Their conception of the alliance is that they must preserve their key positions in the new states; that the trade unions must not fight for higher wages, and that no step must be taken to change their relations with the imperialist countries.

To justify this attitude, all kinds of spurious theories are put forward to bolster up the idea of African exceptionalism. The new formula "African Socialism" can be used, and is being used, not to advance the cause of socialism, but to hold it back. Trade unions are urged to postpone wage demands, there is resistance to working class elements advancing to the leadership of the national movements, and to the formation of Marxist Parties, on the plea that there are no class struggles in Africa.

The alliance of class forces (expressed in the national movements which won independence) is still essential in the new stage of the struggle. But the advance to socialism is possible only if the working class advances to the leadership in the national united front. The spread of socialist ideas in Africa does not mean that socialism is the

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next item on the agenda of independent African states. True, many positive and impressive measures are being taken in Algeria, Ghana, Mali, Guinea and elsewhere which can prepare the way to socialism.

The next step was clearly outlined in the perspective of an independent national democracy given in the 1960 Moscow Declaration of Communist and Workers' Parties, representing a transitional stage to socialism, and seems to be the most likely path of development:

> "In the present situation, favourable domestic and international conditions arise in many countries for the establishment of an independent national democracy, that is, a state which consistently upholds its political and economic independence, fights against imperialism and its military blocs, against military bases on its territory; a state which fights against the new forms of colonialism and the penetration of imperialist capital; a state which rejects dictatorial and despotic methods of government; a state in which the people are ensured broad democratic rights and freedoms (freedom of speech, press, assembly, demonstrations, establishment of political parties and social organisations), the opportunity to work for the enactment of an agrarian reform and other democratic and social changes, and for participation in shaping government policy. The countries concerned make rapid social progress and play an active part in the people's struggle for peace, against the aggressive policies of the imperialist camp, for the complete abolition of colonial oppression."

This transitionary stage arises from the fact that the working class is not yet in the leadership of the independent African states, and (apart from Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, Senegal, Sudan, and South Africa) Marxist parties do not exist. Even where they do exist they are not yet a decisive force in the national movement.

Neither Marx nor Lenin were able to provide solutions in advance to the new problems facing Africa today. But the principles of Marxism-Leninism provide guiding lines for a solution. They can serve to throw light on the decisive factors in African society, the specific class relations which exist, the essential steps to complete the process of national liberation, and Africa's place in the advance of national liberation and socialism throughout the world.

The advance of working class elements into the leadership of the African national movements is essential even for the next stage of advance, which is the building of an independent democratic state. This is not a "third way", but a transitionary stage to socialism. The transition may be of long or short duration, depending on the relation of class forces in the country and especially on the strength and political consciousness of the working class. For it is the working class, with its revolutionary Marxist Parties which is the harbinger of socialism:

> "Wherever the anti-imperialist front was under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist, Communist Parties, the revolution did not stop at the bourgeois-democratic stage but developed into a socialist revolution.
>
> "Wherever the movement was headed by the bourgeoisie, or bourgeois influences predominated in the anti-imperialist front, the national bourgeoisie that came to power led society along the path of capitalist development, thus delaying the transition to a higher stage of the revolution." (*Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, English edition, p. 501.)

This lesson needs to be understood in Africa today. If the principles of Marxism-Leninism are applied within the context of the struggle through Africa, there are good prospects of advance in the new stage of the struggle, for the growth of independent national democracies, and an advance towards socialism.

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Art and Ideological Superstructure

Ernst Fischer

We print below, with the permission of the author, a chapter of a book on "Art and Coexistence" on which he is at present working. The translation is by Jack Cohen. The sub-heads are ours.

IN the past, mechanical materialism assumed that thinking was a sort of sweating of the brain, thought the perspiration of the intellect. Today we know what a complicated, contradictory business thinking is, that is, we do not as yet really know but are just beginning to find out.

Unfortunately many dogmatic Marxists have equally simplified notions about the ideas of men, their thoughts, feelings, dreams, moral and aesthetic views, which they regard as the sweat products of material, social conditions. Art and literature are regarded as a kind of snail's shell; each social class or social system carries its own snail's shell on its back, the product of precisely this and of no other snail.

In the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* [1] Marx speaks of the production relations which correspond to a certain level of development of the material productive forces:

> "The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. . . . With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."

Against Over-Simplification

I reproduce this passage, which has been quoted thousands of times and which embodies a discovery of the very greatest importance, in order to draw attention to the fact that it combines precision with caution. It is the *totality* of the production relations on which the ideological superstructure is based. The *material* transformation of a society can be determined with "the precision of science", but this is not the case with regard to the contradictory, the more slow or the more rapid transformation of the ideological superstructure. The mode of production of material life conditions not only the social and political but also the intellectual life process, but nevertheless, as Marx and Engels declared repeatedly, the intellectual process reacts on the material process: there is not mechanical causality, but dialectical, reciprocal interaction, and only "in the last analysis" are the economic relations decisive.

Let us, therefore, guard against any kind of simplification, above all in the spheres of art and literature. Every simplification in these spheres transforms the richness of reality into the poverty of the blueprint. There is a kind of "abstractionism" in the approach to art which does not analyse the concrete work of art, nor see the living artist in the process of his development, but which at the outset devises compartments into which the artists and their works are arbitrarily fitted. A nominalist would say: "God created the world, the devil created compartments." It quite often happens that a great realist painter is jumbled together in one of these compartments with a perpetrator of academic kitsch or that such important artists of our time as Picasso, Léger, Moore, Neizvestni, end up grouped with the chocolate-box merchants of a commercialised art. Such statements as "expressionism reflects the ideological superstructure of the decadent bourgeoisie" or "abstract painting represents the ideological superstructure of imperialism" are all too convenient, dogmatic blueprints. If literature and art were nothing more than the ideological

[1] See *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 329 (Lawrence & Wishart).

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superstructure of definite economic social relations, then works of art would die out along with their social preconditions; then ancient cave drawings, Homer's epics, Gothic crucifixions, the creations of the Renaissance would not seem alive for us. In fact, however, what happens is that mediocre artists, who follow *only* the ruling ideas of their time, whose work as a consequence is *nothing* more than ideological superstructure, are dead and forgotten (or are at best suitable material for a doctorate thesis); but that every significant work of art transcends the frontiers of the given social situation, the *hic et nunc* (the here and now), anticipates the future, elaborates Man in time-conditioned but lasting features.

People in Change

We oppose the existentialist view of an irrevocable "condition humaine", of man's eternal fate in pure existence—but we also reject vulgar Marxism when it only accepts as valid social character masks and treats individuals only as representatives of a class—landowners, serfs, bourgeois, petty bourgeois, proletarian. The worker is not simply a unit in the production process, bearing the imprint of his class destiny, but he is also a man with his contradictions, a man who loves and suffers, a man who breathes and dies like any other man. If we only regard the worker as a hero of labour and dispense with inner conflicts, tragic moments, doubts and collapse as "petty bourgeois", and provide every situation with an optimistic solution, then we are in process of eliminating reality and replacing it by cadres' reports. Stalin once said that Communists are made of a different mould from other men, are really people of a special kind. We are not prepared to accept such a division between us who are Communists and all other people. Of course, we must strive to develop in ourselves not only a high degree of consciousness but also courage, solidarity, friendliness, helpfulness, humanity. None the less, we should not proclaim these as our own virtues. If other people recognise them we shall be glad. Self-praise is no recommendation.

There are no unchangeable people—people who are things in themselves; but people change themselves in changing their environment. What is certainly true is that human conflicts, problems, disasters, are a feature of all social systems, even though they are influenced and modified by them. What exists are not only class antagonisms, the cleavage between the old and the new social orders, historical *discontinuity*, but the development of the human race as a "*continuum*" throughout all class struggles, revolutions, the decay and break up of social systems.

Each class, each society, each age makes a contribution to the elaboration of the human kind, passes on what it creates to the future. The eternally shipwrecked but ever hopeful Odysseus, his return home as a stranger recognised only by a dog and a servant—these and many other situations in the old myths and their representation in art and literature are as gripping today as they were thousands of years ago, and they will continue to be so throughout future ages. What are transitory are the social character masks—the aristocrat, the plebeian, the bourgeois, the proletarian. What emerges as permanent, as the meaning, the aim, of all struggles is Man, the universal Man. What the poet, what the artist, creates is not so much a reflection of what is conditioned by time, as the prophetic offering, the anticipation, the transcending of frontiers, the discovery of as yet undiscovered realities. Literature and art are thus only in part the ideological superstructure of definite economic social relations. To an important extent they are more than the reflection of these relations. In the detailed elaboration of what exists today, they grasp the reality of tomorrow and they fashion this reality. The poet, the artist, no matter how much his work is socially conditioned, no matter how little he can avoid being partisan, is in a very special sense the bearer of the human "continuum".

Alienation

In simple, self-sufficient societies art and literature conform in a relatively easy and recognisable fashion to the social system. In such societies the forms of art even correspond more or less to the social structure; the Homeric epics, for example, to the early Monarchy, the rise of warlike chiefs from the midst of the collective, the Doric songs to an aristocratic order, the drama to the democratic Greek city states. In medieval Europe the poetry of the troubadors, of the Minnesänger, was supported by a new class, the knightly petty nobility, which expressed the situation of the knights and through this that of feudalism as a whole. In the system of rank and estate, the estates were pillars of the artistic superstructure, each estate standing for itself, yet all striving upwards together like the pillars of a Gothic cathedral in united affirmation of their order as God given. The contradiction with the oppressed, the heretics, the rebels, likewise found sporadic artistic expression. And the more feudalism declined, undermined by the new productive forces, the more frequently the negation of what existed came to the fore. But what should be noted is that every social system has found important artistic

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and literary apologists. The sense of integration, the feeling of belonging to a great community in which the individual is incorporated, is overwhelming. It is only with the industrial revolution and the victorious capitalist system that this unity was destroyed. *Alienation* of man became dominant. Individual and society confronted one another as alien forces.

Contradictory, extraordinarily complicated interactions of productive forces, production relations, artistic themes and means of expression develop in bourgeois-capitalist society. An essentially new factor was the *non-conformity* of the writer and artist with the bourgeois capitalist world. The artist, now become a commodity producer, a "free personality", from the start kept his distance from the capitalist world, in romantic revolt against it or critical rejection of it. It was not only due to the mistrust of the bourgeois for "miserable" art, his suspicion of the artist as a refractory buffoon, that was the basis of the antagonism between artist and bourgeois, but the essence of capitalism contradicts the essence of art—capitalist aridness, meanness, its puritanical attitude or hypocrisy towards wealth, as against the passion, the suffering, which are the stuff of art and which was intensified to the utmost by the Romantics as the declared antithesis of the artist to the bourgeois. And finally it was the experience of alienation, *the longing for a "lost unity"*, the desire for a human world, which conditioned the situation of the artist in the bourgeois world. Capitalism, the bourgeoisie, *did not find a single apologist* amongst the outstanding artists and writers; they only found them—in countless numbers—amongst the mediocre hangers-on.

Contradictions Exposed

The producers of art and literature in capitalist society do not, for the most part, come from either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, but from the middle sections. The petty bourgeois is the social contradiction in its essence; dichotomy, inner conflict, disquieting uncertainty, pervade his whole existence. Because this is his social position, the petty bourgeois intellectual (this is not a term of abuse but a sociological concept) is fitted supremely for the job of depicting artistically a contradictory, extraordinarily mobile, shifting and changing society. In most cases he presents it neither as an agent of the bourgeoisie nor as a spokesman of the proletariat. That the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas applies, it is true, in unrestricted fashion to the average run of writers and artists, but only with important limitations to the original and outstanding ones. These separate themselves from the rulers, direct criticism at their world, cannot bring themselves to praise the existing set-up. The praise of lords, common in feudal times and during the Renaissance, is regarded under capitalism as contemptible by every self-respecting artist.

The wretched saying: "Whose bread I eat, His song I sing" disappeared along with the feudal patron. From Rousseau to Tolstoy, from Blake to Kafka, the writers of the bourgeois world adopted the nonconforming position. Although not uninfluenced by the ruling ideas, they often counterposed to these other ideas which were by no means sympathetic to the millionaires and prime ministers. Their solidarity, for the most part, was with the degraded and insulted and not with the powerful and titled. Born of the petty bourgeoisie, whose inner contradictions were refined and deepened in them, they remained, in so far as their talent was great enough, true to their artistic integrity, people who had grown beyond a class or a stratum.

One may take Flaubert, Rimbaud, Kafka, Picasso and examine the legacy of their petty bourgeois origin and one will discover many remarkable things. Nevertheless, *the most important thing*, namely the greatness of an artist, what is specific and individual in his art, defies a purely sociological analysis. To what ideological superstructure does the contradictory work of Picasso belong? To that of the "decadent" bourgeoisie? Or to that of the "vacillating" petty bourgeoisie? Or to the modern working class? Any such view would be false. It is the whole contradictory age that finds its expression in Picasso's work; which although in decisive situations is always partisan, against backwardness, oppression, inhumanity, is, however, often merely "non-Party" experiment, artistic play—for the artist must also have his fun without having to answer for it to higher authority. Moreover, he *must* have his fun with forms, colours, literary images, musical constructions. For if he were denied this he would be no use as an artist and would be better employed in an office with regular hours of work. Hence Picasso's work represents art which, soaring above the average in the bourgeois capitalist world, does not on the whole represent the standpoint of the ruling class, but is *an expression of a contradictory social whole*, art in which the prevailing tendency is to side not with the privileged but with the underdog.

The Element of Revolt

The mechanical view that the capitalist world —no longer advancing, but decaying, declining— can only produce a literature and art of decadence, ignores the increasing social contradictions,

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the interpenetration of what is going out of existence and what is coming into being, the manifold forms of literary and artistic revolt against a materialised, de-personalised society, hurrying along in the twilight between consumption and apocalypse. Whoever ignores the element of *revolt* in expressionism, surrealism, futurism, cubism, constructivism, etc., whoever dismisses them simply as "fashion", decadence, deformation as a result of imperialism, as the superstructure of decline, will not be able to grasp the problems of modern art and literature.

The modern trends in art and literature did not arise at the direct or indirect behest of the bourgeoisie, but aroused their wrath (just ask Churchill or Eisenhower, Truman or Adenauer what they think of modern art!). Nevertheless, works of art are commodities. What was shocking and scandalous only yesterday, paves the way for good business tomorrow. The dealer sniffs new pickings in what has been banned. Revolt becomes commercialised. The artist still undiscovered by the public, is sedulously "built up" by means of advertisements and frequently is unable to resist the fame which overwhelms him. The modern artist must experiment. But if his experiment is suddenly bought up, if he is now transformed into a "label" and has to repeat it continuously, then a great danger arises from this monstrous commercialisation of art. The millionaires do not buy abstract paintings because they are to their taste, still less because they regard them as products of imperialism, but because the dealers persuade them that they are a useful sort of capital investment. It is not the search for new means of expression, for new realities, which is "decadent". What is really decadent is deception, routine reproduction, clinging to what is outmoded (as, for example, in abstract painting which is only defended by the art trade against the even stronger urge for a new objectivity). Obviously, artists, works of art, trends in art, do not exist outside society, they are influenced by origin, milieu, by class struggles and social change, by the entire social situation. They breathe the air of their age and grapple with its problems, but they are by no means to be regarded entirely as ideological superstructure (as for example one can regard legislation, political institutions and demands).

On the one hand the social situation influences the artist in many mediated and complicated ways. On the other hand, however, modern productive forces, the transformation of the social environment for which they are responsible in increasing tempo, exert an immediate influence on art and literature. Whether it be New York or Moscow, London or Tokyo, we live in an industrial age, an age of large towns. An agrarian society lasting for thousands of years and which continued to exist under various forms of domination, is approaching its end, it is being displaced in many parts of the world by a dynamic industrial society. Conservative stability, the world of rank, the world which stands still, have vanished, the large town, not the village, is now decisive. Modern industrial society with its technique and science, masses and speed, becomes the motive force inspiring new sensations, feelings, experiences. The modern urban man sees, hears, associates, differently from the man belonging to a more stable, sluggish social structure. What is *modern* develops inexorably right through the different social systems in contradiction to the ideologies of the normal rhythm of life. While the great mass of art consumers first seek to acquire the art of yesterday and of the period before it (often in simplified and embellished forms) the modern artist and his public have been seized by the agitation, the restlessness, of the large town, and this makes them eager for what is new, for adventures into the unknown.

Dynamic Age

The modern artist does not, of course, work without a tradition behind him. He is in a position to draw on a much greater accumulation of material from the past than any of his predecessors; what he needs, however, is not the preservation of what has already been accomplished, the clinging to an established style, but the drive for that which has not been attained, the undiscovered, the unheard of. This break with what is traditional (and no serious artist would deny the need to know and learn from the traditional) is not a symptom of decadence, but corresponds to an age of enormous movement and change. Such breaks also occur in past periods of social transformation, when an interpenetration of the old with the rise of new forms took place. But there has never been so dynamic an age as this. Who can hope to deal with an encounter on the streets of a capital city, an atomic explosion, a space flight with nineteenth-century means of expression? How can the new building and artistic materials fail to conjure new forms into existence? How can a simple, severe, functional architecture, which is relegating that of carved scrolls to the background, content itself with figures in bronze or marble reminiscent of a confectionery shop? Bertolt Brecht's saying: "because it is so, it remains not so", applies not only to social events but equally to the themes and problems of art and literature.

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Modern productive forces shatter all local and national boundaries. The exclusiveness and self-sufficiency of old cultures no longer exist, not even the narrow circles in which there develops a unified style such as Gothic or Baroque. Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* noted this development. "The intellectual creations of nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.[2]" It is a contradictory process. On the one hand new national movements emerge, above all, of the peoples hitherto oppressed, new forms of nationalism arise, the struggle of social systems, all restrict the emergence of a world literature. On the other hand it is impossible to prevent the reciprocal influence of the literature and of the different cultures on one another. "Local colour" (the great discovery of Romanticism), the specific features of art and literature, have not disappeared, but are retreating more and more into the background. The English Elizabethans, the French poets Villon and Rimbaud, Chinese lyrics and the Japanese theatre were as important to Bertolt Brecht as the Germans—Luther, Grimmelshausen and Wedekind. His plays belong, above all, to world literature and not so much to the German national theatre. The world, divided as it is into opposed social systems, still remains *one* world in which we have to live together if we do not wish to die. In hundreds of different ways everything is linked with everything else—scientific discoveries, technical inventions, political decisions. The most distant events have their impact on the most remote valley. The lights and shadows of everything happening in the world play on apparently isolated events. Nation, class, social system, condition the work of the artist, but by no means exclusively. More and more *the whole wide world* is becoming the decisive factor.

The Artist's Standpoint

The artist—in the midst of a chaotic world—is subject to many influences. He must choose, reject, accept, that is to say, he has to adopt a position, a standpoint in one way or another. In leaving out what he regards as unimportant, in concentrating on that which is essential for him, this conscious or unconscious adoption of a standpoint is an ever new, an *individual* act by the artist. Although social factors of all kinds, such as origin, milieu, education, social position, contribute to forming this standpoint, it is never the inevitable or only possible result of these factors. The artist's sensibility, his intense reaction to new situations and realities, makes possible frequent and sudden changes, a development which is richer and more incalculable than that of people with less acute perceptions and fantasy. Once an artist begins to freeze into dogma, once his reactions—which consist in his being able to see a thing, experience an event, as if *for the first time* —are replaced by monotonous clichés, then he ceases to fulfil his unique social function. The artist is no mere recorder but a person who feels, anticipates, scents, what is new, a discoverer of new realities, one who does not just jog along behind accepted views and demands, but who leaps ahead into undiscovered country.

A Free Decision

The adoption of a position by the artist can happen either spontaneously or be the result of deep consideration, but in all circumstances it ought to be a *free* decision not the reflex of a resolution, not the result of some "guidance". The artist in early times was regarded as the mouthpiece of a higher power, as one who was inspired, possessed, what came out of him was not an I but an It. Later this higher power was secularised and took the form of the employer, the Church, the Lords, the Town Dignitaries. The artist in bourgeois capitalist society was transformed—by questionable means—into an emancipated individual. His social mission was no longer regulated from outside but originated in the artist's own conscience and consciousness. This freedom of the artist (this is emphasised for the express benefit of apologists for societies based on rank and estate)—despite all its deformation at the hands of a "free market economy", the commercialisation of art and the isolation of the artist —was a great step forward, for it was the prerequisite for a new literary and artistic flowering and variety. What we should oppose is not the absolute freedom of the artist, but its limitation, crippling, stunting under capitalism. It is, therefore, a task for socialist society *to find the synthesis, to unite social responsibility with the maximum of individual initiative.* The artist must not again degenerate into becoming the mouthpiece of a higher power, nor into the situation of those whose sole task is to fulfil the wishes of the employer. While he should be conscious in himself of his obligations to the socialist collective, he should be free to choose his subjects and his means of expression.

In decisive situations no socialist writer or artist will shrink from becoming an agitator or propagandist for actual needs and demands. But to regard this as his most important task would

[2] *Marx-Engels Selected Works,* Vol. 1, p. 36.

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be to limit absurdly the boundless tasks and possibilities of art. If the socialist artist were to become nothing more than the mouthpiece of a Central Committee, merely a highly skilled member of an agitation and propaganda department, then the result would be not merely that he would be degraded as an artist, but also that he would be ineffective as an agitator and propagandist. Were socialist art compelled to adapt itself to the exigencies of the current tactical situation, then the life would go out of it. Its gigantic contribution to socialist society consists, after all, in that it goes far beyond cadre reports, statistics, leading articles and resolutions, that through the medium of art problems are voiced, realities illuminated which are still unknown to many a Party Secretary. It *assists socialist society as art, as poetry, as literature,* as the union of fantasy and consciousness, passion and responsibility, and not as a camouflage for theses, resolutions, political demands. The social mission of the artist, if it is to be effective, must come from the artist's heart, the theme must have seized him, its portrayal, its form corresponding to an inner necessity. A work of art or literature is not socialist simply because it originates in a socialist country, has the flavour of a Party Secretary about it, is easily understood or is expressed by conventional means, but because it originates from socialist conviction.

Responsibility of the Socialist Artist

There are no bourgeois or proletarian, no capitalist or socialist forms or means of expression in art or in literature, but there is socialist *conviction,* the wish, the will to make the socialist world a world of men no longer alienated, one of abundance and of reason, of freedom and humanity.

In both the capitalist and the socialist worlds of our time, art and literature, in so far as their most significant products are concerned, are not only an ideological superstructure on the production relations. In many different ways they are the attempt to express a rapidly changing reality by the use of suitable means; if not to reveal in detail a most highly complicated whole, then to anticipate both the disturbing as well as the magnificent possibilities of our time. In this situation *the responsibility* of the socialist writers and artists is enormous. They can only fulfil this responsibility if the Party recognises them as adult and independent minded, as people who take their *métier* seriously. The great task of the Party is to assist art in every way, to give it the fullest possible scope, to endeavour by example, discussion, by intellectual stimulus, to keep alive and to deepen the socialist conviction of the artist. It is important to widen to the utmost the general social, intellectual and moral horizons, both of the consumers as well as the producers of culture; not only to tolerate but to stimulate competition between the various artistic trends, tendencies and styles. It is only as a result of such competition, from many-sided initiative, from the manifold discovery of new realities, that the flowering of socialist art and literature will arise.

In this flowering, socialist art and literature will leap the boundaries of the world which gives them birth. They speak not only to socialists; they direct themselves to all who desire a world fit for human beings to live in. They speak to a *human race which is in process of arising* and, because of this, their responsibility is great, their search for the new indispensable, their possibilities immense.

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Some Thoughts on British Poetry Today

M. A. Cohen

WHAT ought to be said about the state of British poetry today? Two recent contributors to this journal (Barbara Niven in August 1962, and Honor Arundel in January 1963), have dealt with Hugh MacDiarmid, hailing him as a major poet—a view it is difficult to disagree with. Hugh MacDiarmid's great work is one of the most important guarantees of the future of British poetry. At the same time I think that some of the reservations about MacDiarmid as a Marxist expressed in David Craig's contribution to *Hugh MacDiarmid: A Festschrift* (1962) ought to be considered. For me, MacDiarmid's Marxism is romantic and inconsistent, but as a Romantic he deserves to rank alongside the great Romantic poets of 150 years ago. Indeed, much of his work is a fulfilment of tasks for poetry laid down by Wordsworth and Shelley.

Progressive poets are not too common at the present time. The vitalising movements in the Theatre and Novel since the mid-1950s have not been accompanied by much that is comparable in verse. If we leave aside the fine songs of the Peace movement, we are left with the work of one or two figures. Christopher Logue is the most prominent among the younger generation. His aspirations as a poet are certainly exciting—especially his attempt to assimilate Brecht in some of the pieces in *Songs* (1960). On the whole though, *Songs* is a rather bitty and experimental collection. The poems I find most impressive are the love lyrics based on Neruda and the splendidly wry and Brechtian parable of *The Ass' Song:*

In a nearby town
There lived an Ass,

Who in this life—
As all good Asses do—

Served his Master
Faithfully and true.

When this Ass died
And fled above,

For his reward—
That all good Asses have—

The Master made
From his loyal hide
A whip with which
His successor was lashed.

In a nearby town
His successor is lashed.

A Narrow Circle

Turning from this rather isolated figure to what is typical of poetry at the present time, we must be struck by the narrowness of the social circle in which it is written. (I refer here to the conventional notion of poetry, not folk song lyrics or pop songs.) The fashionable poets are a small and remarkably homogeneous group, whose activities centre around (a) the universities and (b) the metropolitan literary world. The association with the universities is especially striking. An anthology called *New Lines* (1956) purporting to be representative of what was best and new in Fifties poetry, had nine contributors, six of whom were university lecturers, and one a university librarian. The other two were Arts graduates. Penguin's *The New Poetry* (1962), had twenty poets, twelve of whom were university teachers, whilst the remainder had inevitably passed through the university Arts Departments on their way to jobs as writers, teachers etc. The recent *New Lines II* (Macmillan, 1963) is also predominantly academic in its contributors. Frankie Howerd has said that you need a degree nowadays to get away with being filthy on television; it would seem that you really ought to have one if you want to make the grade as a poet too.

What it amounts to is that the circle of poets today does not go very much outside that section of society to which academic literary education has been given. The thought occurs to me, though I am probably expressing it crudely, that this is an extreme development of the division of labour. Poetry, once the public speech of primitive societies, is in Britain today so much a specialised activity, that the poets do not even bother to produce it for anyone else anymore. They write it for fellow poets: each poet-don's new book of verse is reviewed by a fellow poet-don. But—and it is the type of paradox that the division of labour has brought about so far as art is concerned—whilst we may deplore poetry's lack of contact with the masses, we have to accept that the specialists know most about it, and have, in fact,

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helped to preserve this great English tradition, in however diluted or academic a form. So that we shall have to ask for their help if poetry is ever to expand outwards to the people again. Socialist culture builds on what is best in the old, as well as creating the new.

Aesthetic Judgement

I would contend that contemporary poets deserve a reading, however far from Marxism the majority of them are. Apart from anything else, explicit ideology is not necessarily the essence of a literary work. What we have to assess is often not so much the writer's explicit ideology, as the truth of the imaginative world which his words have constructed. This may be relatively easy to respond to, but difficult to describe in other than subjective terms. The Marxist historical perspective of poetry provided by Christopher Caudwell and George Thompson will certainly help us to understand poetry today, but it does not provide us with a pat formula for evaluating a particular work. Literary criticism, like all forms of aesthetic judgement, is a very tricky business.

It is obvious too, that the non-Marxist poet may well have something to offer, even if it is not the committed poetry of a Brecht. An honest poem about sex, for example, is something in a world where commercial culture has drenched the theme with triviality, brutality and sentimentality. And poets, who would not touch the theory of Marxist dialectics with a barge pole, can vividly recreate the dialectical processes of human relations or nature through the fidelity of their images to life, as distinct from theory. I do not think we should ever be hasty about dismissing any creative writer.

Robert Graves

The work of Robert Graves, a senior figure in the Poetry World, seems to me to provide an interesting problem for literary evaluation. There is no question that the bulk of Graves's work is politically insignificant and that such attitudes as do come through in his verse and pronouncements on verse are often reactionary and mystical in the extreme. Take his views on the function of poetry for example, given in an Essay called *The Making and Marketing of Poetry:*

> "Poetry, as I understand it, is written from personal necessity, not for the market; it is made as an oyster makes pearls. So far from coaxing or bludgeoning his public into admiration, he does not consider the public at all. He knows that an intensely difficult poetic problem has been set him by a powerful if nebulous character whom I prefer to call the Muse, the judge and keeper of his conscience. But only when the poem, by omission of certain incoherences and idiosyncrasies becomes externalised and viable as a general disclosure, does he feel free to lay it aside. The poem then starts a life of its own and if his intimate friends—the two or three whose judgement he really values—greet it with silent approval, that is a relief."

Marxists must find this a depressing claim. Characteristically Graves repudiates the Market—but what does he write poetry for? Not for the public, not for any audience larger than the two or three friends whose judgement he really values. This is a mixture of integrity and humbug. If he cares so little for his audience why does he bother to have his poems published? And why does the "powerful if nebulous Muse" demand that the finished poem be "externalised and viable as a general disclosure"? Perhaps we ought simply to be grateful that Graves's Muse does demand this and that it is his achievement to be one of the more readable poets of our time. But it remains depressing that he should even suggest that the privacy of his poetry is the source of its integrity and a norm for all poets. The Marxist view must be that of the great English Romantic poets: a private poetry is contrary to the very nature of the art. And yet one of England's greatest poets, John Donne, often wrote for a circle no wider than his immediate acquaintances. And, after all, a Marxist poet like Hugh MacDiarmid fares little better with the masses than Graves and has been known to express not dissimilar views about his audience.

Cult of Irrational

Few poets could provide a better text than Graves for Sir Charles Snow's indictment of the twentieth century literary intellectual in *The Two Cultures*. There is a strong cult of the irrational in Graves's poetry throughout his long career as an active poet. The fantasies and dream landscapes which form the subject of so many of his poems seem to stem partly from horrific traumatic experiences stretching back into childhood, partly from a reaction against Victorian forms of rationalism, but, above all, from an attempt to suppress the poet's memory of shattering experiences in the first world war. This last seems to me understandable but undeniably escapist and life-denying. The most explicit statement of his life's philosophy is in a poem called *The Second Fated*, (Collected Poems, 1959):

> Fortune enrolled me among the second-fated
> Who have read their own obituaries in *The Times*,
> Have heard "Where, death, thy sting? Where,
> grave, thy victory?"
> Intoned with unction over their still clay,
> Have seen two parallel red-ink lines drawn
> Under their manic-depressive bank accounts . . .

This seems to refer to the fact that Graves had been officially posted as a casualty at one point during the war, only to return, like Orpheus, from the dead. The consequence of this experience has

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been a complete rejection of the rational world, (how differently we can imagine Wilfred Owen responding):

> Your accepted universe . . .
> . . . formed scientifically
> From whatever there was before Time was,
> And begging the question of perfect consequence,
> May satisfy the general run of men
> (if "run" be an apt term for patent paralytics)
> That blueprints destine all they suffer here,
> But does not satisfy certain few else.

This is arrogant and, even as a statement of its own kind of philosophy, pretty feeble. We cannot let it off just because it's in verse. The poem concludes:

> We were then shot through by merciful lunar shafts
> Until hearts tingled, heads sang, and praise flowed;
> And learned to scorn your factitious universe
> Ruled by the death which we had flouted:
> Acknowledging only that from the Dove's egg
> hatched
> Before aught was, but wind-unpredictable
> As our second birth would be, or our second love:
> A moon-warmed world of discontinuance.

The lunar theme here leads us to the most mystical—and in recent years the most important—element in Graves's outlook: his obsession with a moon deity called *The White Goddess*, the subject of a book (1946), another essay in *Steps*, and a good many poems (usually better than the one above).

According to Graves the "central secret of Neolithic and Bronze Age religious faith" in many parts of Europe, Africa and Asia, was the existence of matriarchal societies, worshipping variously named goddesses of the moon, and thriving in poetry and magic. For Graves the decline of Western society dates from

> . . . the gradual supression of the lunar Mother-goddesses's inspiratory cult, and its supercession by . . . the busy, rational cult of the Solar God Apollo, who rejected the Orphic tree-alphabet in favour of the commercial Phoenician alphabet—the familiar ABC—and initiated European literature and science.

But the poets who count for Graves, the "Muse poets", have continued to worship the White Goddess. These he loosely terms romantic poets—"Their imagery, I have shown, is drawn either consciously or unconsciously from the cult of the White Goddess, and the magic their poems exert largely depends on its closeness to her mysteries". The "Muse poets" are able to go on doing this because, while the majority of women have fallen under the subjugation of masculine rational society, there are those in whom the Muse power is present, and with these the poet falls in love, "absolutely, and his true love is for him the embodiment of the Muse". He often cites poems like Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* as evidence for this, but brings others into the fold by the following argument:

> A simple loving declaration: "There is none greater in the universe that the Triple Goddess!" has been made by every Muse-poet in the English language (and by countless others, down the centuries, in various European, African and Asian idioms); though the Goddess is sometimes, of course, given such cautiously abstract titles as "Nature", "Truth", "Beauty", or "Poetry" . . .

I like that "of course".

Well, Sir Charles Snow could scarcely ask for more. The affirmation of Bronze Age religious faith, of a "moon-warmed world of discontinuance". The view is hardly likely to commend itself to readers on the factory floor either: one can imagine the cries of "Give him a couple of weeks behind a lathe and see what he says!" or "How can he feel like that about the moon, now the Russians have photographed her backside?"—or much worse.

Graves's Love Poems

There are a number of points to be made here. Firstly Graves is by no means the only modern poet to have invented highly personal and fantastic myths for his poetry. Some modern poets, feeling the lack of the framework of reference provided between writer and reader by the myths of the past, have put forward their own, based on private experience, but advanced as if they possessed universal validity. Such poets include Yeats and Lorca. The difference between Yeats and Graves is that Graves appears to believe his myths instead of regarding them as metaphors. But this too could be said of some great progressive poets like Blake—and MacDiarmid whose views on the "Celtic genius" are mystical enough.

Secondly, Graves's poetry—as distinct from his myths—is what counts. And the myths often have surprisingly little bearing even on those (largely post-war) poems where they are implicit. Because the White Goddess is embodied in the form of the women loved by the poet, the poems dedicated to her are usually just love poems of considerable lyric grace.

Graves's facility with the love lyric is well illustrated in *The Chink*, originally intended as an imitation of seventeenth-century style, but republished in the Collected Poems, as a poem in its own right.

> A sunbeam on the well-waxed oak,
> In shape resembling not at all
> The ragged chink by which it broke
> Into this darkened hall,
> Swims round and golden over me,
> The sun's plenipotentiary.
>
> So may my round love a chink find:
> With such address to break

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Into your grief-occluded mind
As you shall not mistake
But, rising, open to me for truth's sake.

What we notice in this and in most of Graves's poetry is his commitment to communication and to the English poetic tradition. The one point where Graves is with us ideologically is in his rejection of the rootless cosmopolitanism of Pound and Eliot who felt that poetry based upon single national traditions and languages is now "provincial", and that, accordingly, the truly modern poet has to develop a style and symbols that express an international culture, sometimes described as "Western Civilisation." I think we agree with Graves (see *The Making and Marketing of Poetry*) that the work of this school tends to consist of sophisticated pastiche, parody and O.K. references for the initiated. Both Graves and MacDiarmid seem to agree that, to become international, an artist must paradoxically be as national as possible.

If we turn to some of the younger poets to have emerged in the past ten years we notice that their attitudes have a good deal in common with Graves'. It is not that they claim allegiance to the "White Goddess"—far from it—but that they seem to agree that poetry is (a) personal, asocial, (b) something that should be communicable.

The two anthologies edited by Robert Conquest, *New Lines* (1956) and *New Lines II* (1963) provide a basis for discussion of contemporary trends.

"New Lines"

The first *New Lines* was a reflection of perhaps the most dominant trend in the poetry of the Fifties. The editor Robert Conquest defined the qualities of the collection as follows:

> If one had briefly to distinguish this poetry of the Fifties from its predecessors, I believe the most important general point would be that it submits to no great systems of theoretical constructs nor agglomerations of unconscious commands. It is free from both mystical and logical compulsions and—like modern philosophy—is empirical in its attitude to all that comes. This reverence for the real person or event is indeed, a part of the general intellectual ambience (in so far as that is not blind or retrogressive) of our time. One might, without stretching matters too far, say that George Orwell with his principle of real, rather than ideological honesty, exerted, even though indirectly, one of the major influences on modern poetry.

What *New Lines* offered was a sort of "Manchester Guardian" verse. The poets had long given up belief in any ideological systems. Since there were not any brave causes left either, there was very little to get emotional about. Thus some of the most interesting poems in the collection were about the intellectual who is not taken in by any romantic nonsense anymore: Kingsley Amis's *Wrong Words* and *Against Romanticism*, John Wain's *Reasons For Not Writing Orthodox Nature Poetry*. The movement of John Wain's poem is significant. After dismissing everything the Romantic poets would have written about the beautiful scene he is looking at, he concludes that all there is left to be said is:

Simply I love this mountain and this bay
With love I cannot speak by rote,
And where you love you cannot break away.

Is this not tantamount to a confession that one should not be writing a poem at all? A very similar development takes place in Kingsley Amis's *Here Is Where*, in which the poet first of all invokes a country scene in conventional poetic diction, then dismisses this sort of description, concluding that to a townie like himself, even a window box is not worth looking at when he's got company. It is difficult to make poetry out of such negativism.

In both anthologies the poets' belief in the "real person or event" tends to be limited to one in personal relationships. The dominant themes are individual, domestic, suburban. A typical attitude is found in a poem called *Admonition* by Elizabeth Jennings (*New Lines II*):

Sign nothing but let the vague
Slogans stand without your name.
Your indifference they claim
Though the issues seem big.

Signing a paper puts off
Your responsibilities.
Trust rather your own distress
As in, say, matters of love.

This is presumably what Conquest meant by "real rather than ideological honesty". It seems to me to imply an irresponsible, not to say solipsist, view of life.

Political themes are largely shunned in *New Lines II*. There is an occasional tentative flirtation as in D. J. Enright's refreshingly ironic *Warm Protest*:

To shoot a man against the National Library wall!
—The East unsheathes its barbarous finger-nail.

In Europe this was done in railway trucks,
Cellars underground, and such sequestered nooks.

To wound a Library wall with bullet nicks!
Really hardly cultured. No respect for books.

How shall I ever (never easy, as you know)
Persuade the boys and girls to use the Library now?

I—I assure you—speak but as a teacher—
Lover of learning—in no way a traitor—

Good God!—don't think that I've an axe to grind
It's only—it was simply—merely—never mind.

Anything in the nature of a positive affirmation in these collections is usually shunned or expressed with painful circumspection. In Philip Larkin, one of

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the most gifted of the contributors, a gentle elegiac note (not unlike the one sounded by Matthew Arnold 100 years ago for disillusioned liberals) is heard in *Church Going* and *The Whitsun Weddings*. But the most common thing to find affirmed is the splendid rigour of the poet's own intellectual honesty. Jonathan Price's *A Considered Reply to a Child* is an example of the kind of poem one often finds done well:

> "I love you," you said between two mouthfuls of pudding.
> But not funny; I didn't want to laugh at all.
> Rolling three years' experience in a ball,
> You nudge it friendlily across the table.
>
> A stranger, almost, I was flattered—no kidding.
> It's not every day I hear a thing like that;
> And when I do my answer's never pat.
> I'm about nine times your age, ten times less able
>
> To say—what you said; incapable of unloading
> Plonk at someone's feet, like a box of bricks,
> A declaration. When I try, it sticks
> Like fish-bones in my throat; my eyes tingle.
>
> What's called "passion", you'll learn, may become "overriding".
> But not in me it doesn't: I'm that smart,
> I can give everything and keep my heart.
> Kisses are kisses. No need for souls to mingle.
>
> Bed's bed, what's more, and you'd say it's meant for sleeping;
> And, believe me, you'd be absolutely right.
> With luck you'll never lie awake all night,
> Someone beside you (rather like "crying") weeping.

It is a good poem. But isn't this a significantly overplugged response in contemporary literature: haven't we had about enough of this alleged absolute frankness in the novels of Mr. Amis and others? It could be that a young writer who abdicates from wider political and social themes feels that he's got to be tough-minded and rigorous about *something*, for God's sake, and what could be safer than sex? It is curious how often the view of sex produced by those who trust only their "own distress, as in, say, matters of love" (as Miss Jennings put it)—is a stereotyped and cynical one.

The feeling that "there are no brave causes left" can be poetically crippling. Many poems in this collection suggest that the poet finds life a pretty prosaic affair, and the result, only too often is a poem that is prosaic in every sense. Fragment after fragment (few of the authors are able to sustain even a moderately long piece) leaves me with the feeling of "so what?" It is left to Ted Hughes's few contributions to demonstrate a poetry which the uninitiated would recognise as "poetic".

Admittedly, there has never been any Chinese wall between poetry and prose, and attempts to erect one are misguided, as Mr. Conquest argues in a stimulating introduction to the 1963 collection. He sees the British modernist movement of between the wars as having been too concerned with novelty of style and language, in an attempt to make poetry as different from prose as possible. Mr. Conquest makes some valuable remarks of the dangers of imposing cosmopolitan effects on the English poetic tradition too. But when he quotes Wordsworth to the effect that the language of a good poem differs in no respect from that of good prose, he provides no justification for the prosiness of some of the poems in this anthology. For one thing Wordsworth probably had long poems in mind like Milton's epics. Secondly, there are too many poems in this book which are "prosaic" in their sheer imaginative poverty. Elizabeth Jennings's *Admonition* is a case in point.

"New Poetry"

The New Poetry, published by Penguin last year, also has a manifesto introducing it, written by A. Alvarez. Mr. Alvarez is a supporter of the Eliot-Pound movement and regards most of the verse written in Britain since the Twenties as a retreat or "negative feedback" from the experimentation of that decade; consequently he commends us to American poets like John Berryman and Robert Lowell, who have, he feels, pointed the way forward. Among the movements he rejects with some derision is that typified by the *New Lines* anthology. All the more surprising to find that a great deal of his own anthology is taken up with very much the same kind of stuff. He even includes most of the *New Lines* poets in his anthology, representing them by pretty much the same selection of poems!

Alvarez's introduction advances the slogan of "beyond the gentility principle" for poetry today. Gentility is defined as "a belief that life is always more or less orderly, people always more or less polite, their emotions and habits more or less decent and more or less controllable: that God, in short, is more or less good." Poets must realise that the world is under the sway of forces that have nothing to do with gentility: "Theologians would call these forces evil, psychologists, perhaps, libido . . . Their public faces are those of two world wars, of the concentration camps, of genocide, of the threat of nuclear war."

We can hardly disagree with this: it is precisely the lack of concern with these great issues which make so many contemporary poets seem rather irrelevant, despite their skill. But there is not much in *The New Poetry* to suggest that there will be a change of heart. In fact a poet like Christopher Logue who is far less "genteel" than Mr. Alvarez's contributors does not get a look in.

Behind this may lie the fact that while Mr. Alvarez mentions the "public face" of evil he seems more

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interested in it as a revelation of the dark workings of the "libido" than anything else. Thus he quotes approvingly an analyst who attributed the guilt felt by refugees who escaped from Nazi Germany partly to the fact that the Nazis fulfilled the deepest and most primitive desires of the refugees themselves—"killing fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children." One feels that a poem making this kind of point would definitely have got into Mr. Alvarez's anthology. It would be an uncommitted poem which found difficulty in apportioning blame for the Nazi massacres of Jews because, after all, they were merely fulfilling the darkest and deepest desires of us all.

One cannot deny that there are a number of poets well worth attention in this anthology. Apart from the American Robert Lowell, there is the outstandingly promising Ted Hughes. If only he would turn his intense and original imagination away from his vision of a predatory natural world to matters of larger human concern. It is surely significant that so many of Hughes's gifted poems are about birds of prey, animals and flowers. This is better than writing about his own sensibility as many of his colleagues do. But after reading through *The New Poetry* one is hungry for poetry that recognises that the proper study of mankind is man, social poetry, polemical poetry.

Social Commitment

The dearth of objective, socially orientated poetry on the British scene today is such that one is tempted to overpraise it when it actually appears. It does in one of the recent two *Penguin Modern Poets* volumes. These contain selections from the work of George Barker, Martin Bell, Charles Causeley, Kingsley Amis, Dom Moraes, and Peter Porter. Peter Porter is the odd man out. What a pleasure to read a socially polemical poet, who can write about Auschwitz, send up Civil Defence and the Early Warning System (a gem this), or take apart the upper middle class world with such venomous precision. He is one of the few young poets I have read who conveys the spirit of the genuinely angry:

> . . . Love goes as the M.G. goes.
> The colonel's daughter in black stockings, hair
> Like sash cords, face iced white, studies art,
> Goes home once a month. She won't marry the men
> She sleeps with, she'll revert to type—it's part
> Of the side-show: Mummy and Daddy in the wings,
> The bongos fading on the road to Haslemere
> Where the the inheritors are inheriting still.
> Marston's Malheureux found his whore too dear;
> Today some Jazz Club girl on the social make
> Would put him through his paces, the aphrodisiac cruel.
> His friends would be the smoothies of our Elizabethan age—
> The Rally Men, Grantchester Breakfast Men, Public School
> Personal Assistants and the fragrant P.R.O.s
> Cavalry-twilled tame publishers praising Logue,
> Classics Honours Men promoting Jazzetry,
> Market researchers married into Vogue.
> It's a Conde Nast world and so Marston's was . . .

More power to Porter's elbow: if I had my way his poem *Made in Heaven* (from Heals and Harrods come her lovely bridegrooms? // One cheque alone furnished two bedrooms) would be printed every week in the *Observer*, inset into Drusilla Beyfus's *Set For Living* column.

Why is it that the young poets to emerge since the war have mainly retreated from themes of public responsibility and political events, unlike their predecessors of the 1930s? This question is posed in an excellent new book by John Press, *Rule and Energy* (Oxford 1963). In his first chapter, entitled *A Neutral Tone* Mr. Press remarks:

> The reader of any representative anthology such as the annual P.E.N. *New Poems* and the *Guiness Book of Poetry* will seldom come across a poem which can be described, even in the broadest sense, as political, or as revealing to us the shape and meaning of the times . . . Why have young poets withdrawn from the public world in which to gain our daily bread, we spend a third of our lives, the only world in which, as political animals, we can satisfy certain of our needs and develop certain of our potentialities?
>
> . . . It is, admittedly, no easy task to discover any principle of coherence or imaginative order in the political and social life of our time, but has not this been true for three hundred and fifty years?

Mr. Press gives a number of factors to be considered: the swing of the pendulum against 1930's attitudes, reaction against Communism, especially the policies on the Arts under Stalin, a feeling of *fin de siècle* in our society, of the danger of taking sides, and of paralysis at the very thought of thermonuclear realities. Mr. Press is always worthy of the closest study in this (I believe) the first comprehensive survey of poetry in Britain since 1950. But it is worth noting that, while in his first section he professes himself dissatisfied with the retreat from public themes, he appears to have changed his mind by the end of the book: "Only in our private lives can we fruitfully exercise moral choice and practise virtue". The question, so well put at the outset, is finally dodged.

The last thing one wants to do is to conclude with some glib equation between achieving socialism and achieving a dynamic new popular poetry. But it is surely significant that people in the U.S.S.R., quite apart from the great interest in literature generally, are now prepared to roll up in thousands to hear—of all things—poetry, the poetry of Evtushenko, Voznesensky and others. Some day the same thing will happen here and the vision of this delightful

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little poem by Hugh MacDiarmid will not be confined, we hope, to Scotland:

> Returning to Glasgow after a long exile
> Nothing seemed to me to have changed its style.
> Buses and trams all labelled "To Ibrox"
> Swung past packed tight as they'd hold with folks.
> Football match, I concluded, but just to make sure
> I asked; and the man looked at me fell dour,
> Then said, "Where in God's name are *you* frae, sir?
> It'll be a record gate, but the cause o' the stir
> Is a debate on 'la loi de l'effort converti'
> Between Professor Macfadyen and a Spainish pairty."
> I gasped. The newsboys came running along,
> "Special! Turkish Poet's Abstruse New Song,
> Scottish Author's Opinions"—and holy snakes,
> I saw the edition sell like hot cakes.

If we can set our sights on a slightly less abstruse poetic ideal there is no reason why we should not attain it. It may be that sudden efflorescence of folk song and the poetry readings done by Centre 42 herald a not so distant spring.

Discussion contribution on:

Problems of Imperialism

James Harvey

IN your editorial note in the October *Marxism Today* you said that Michael Barratt Brown's new book *After Imperialism* contained much valuable data, but you criticised him for "conducting a running fight against some of the main concepts elaborated by Lenin in his *Imperialism; the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*

Brown on Lenin

While you were justified in criticising certain rather muddled passages in the book, it ought to be made clear that Michael Barratt Brown in fact fully accepts Lenin's theory of imperialism and provides a most penetrating analysis, backed by some very useful and clearly presented statistics, on the whole past history of British imperialism and especially of its post-war developments.

He also makes a number of interesting criticisms of Lenin. It is surely justifiable to point out that Lenin drew most of his examples of monopoly growth from pre-1914 Germany and that his account of the key role of the banks did not apply to Britain. His statement that "Monopoly has sprung from the banks" was not true of pre-1914 Britain and, though the banks played an important part in some big mergers in the 1920's, the statement has never been a correct description of the relation between the banks and industry in this country. You point out that the finance oligarchy was effectively in control of Britain's huge capital exports, but this is a different point and does not mean that the banks dominated British industry. Moreover, your "finance oligarchy" presumably refers to the great merchant banks who organised foreign loans in the City before 1914. Lenin's "finance capital" was the result of the "merging of bank with industrial capital" which was characteristic of Germany but not of Britain. You are therefore using the term "finance oligarchy" in a different sense from Lenin.

None of this detracts from the basic point of Lenin's theory that the domination of finance capital is one of the main features of imperialism, but it is surely important to study the actual way in which finance capital has grown to a dominating influence in Britain, rather than simply repeat the phrase about the "merging of bank and industrial capital" as we sometimes do.

Overseas Investments

This is a relatively minor point and I have elaborated it more than Barratt Brown does in his book. His second criticism of Lenin concerns the direction of British overseas investment. Lenin stated that "the principal spheres of investment of British capital are the British colonies" and that "enormous exports of capital are bound up with the possession of enormous colonies" (*Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 58). Barratt Brown points out that this statement was not correct for the pre-1914 period. Slightly more than half of all British overseas investment was in countries out-

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side the Empire, principally in the U.S.A., Latin America and Europe.

Moreover, within the empire British capital went mainly to the more developed Dominions where wages were relatively high, and not to the newly acquired African colonies. Capital exports went primarily to the most industrially developed lands. In the inter-war period there was an important shift towards the empire, but the tendency to invest mainly in the most industrially developed countries has continued to this day. Lenin, on the other hand, thought that capital exports went mainly to backward countries where wages were relatively low (op. cit. p. 57). These facts do not detract from Lenin's theory but they do provide a more accurate picture of the development of British imperialism.

Imperialism and Reformism

Thirdly, and this is probably Barratt Brown's most important and controversial point, he questions whether Lenin was right to attribute the corruption of the upper strata of the working class and the spread of a reformist outlook to the monopoly profits made out of capital exports, i.e., to the tribute from the empire. Apart from the fact referred to above that overseas investment income was not primarily colonial he claims that the correlation between tribute and the spread of reformism is far from clear. The same growth of reformism occurred in other industrial countries such as Scandinavia where empire and overseas colonies were absent. It was just in the years before 1914 when capital exports reached their peak that working class militancy in Britain was at its highest. Barratt Brown suggests that the rise of reformism in the British working class was associated rather with the increase in industrial productivity brought about by the tremendous expansion of our foreign trade, which in turn was stimulated by overseas investment in railways, docks, ships, etc. It was the profits arising from this increasing productivity rather than the direct tribute flowing from colonial superprofits that accounted for the spread of reformism among the British working class.

The United Kingdom gross investment income from overseas was about 3.3 per cent of the national income in 1865, rose to a peak of 8.6 per cent in 1910-13 and has since declined to 3.3 per cent in 1960. If the large outflow of interest and dividends of foreign (mainly U.S.) investments in this country is taken into account, the *net* overseas investment income was only 1.2 per cent of the national income in 1960.

If the tribute theory is right, how do we explain the fact that reformism still has such a strong hold on the working class? Barratt Brown's point does help to explain this and ought surely to be seriously considered.

A Rejoinder

J. R. Campbell

HOW can Michael Barratt Brown "fully accept" Lenin's theory of imperialism, when in fact he makes a number of "interesting criticisms" against the basic premise of that theory. The fact is that Mr. Barratt Brown has his own idiosyncratic interpretation of what Lenin wrote and it is this interpretation rather than anything that Lenin actually wrote that he then proceeds to criticise.

For example, on page 454 of his book after praising Lenin's "perceptiveness" he says:

> "Some of the elements in the picture which Lenin drew were wrong. The British Empire was not built as a result of the pressure of monopoly capital to invest overseas when profits fell at home. The empire was first established by merchant adventurers, and retained and extended by free traders anxious to open up and keep open the markets of the world."

This is a passage of breath-taking impudence. Nowhere in *Imperialism*, nor anywhere else, does Lenin say that the British Empire was built as the result of "the pressure of monopoly capital". Lenin was well aware that the British Empire ante-dated the emergence of monopoly capital, and wrote "even the capitalist colonial policy of previous stages of capitalism is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital".

This sort of thing is continually happening with Barratt Brown. He insists repeatedly that Britain was still a free trade country when Lenin wrote (in 1916), and that the growth of monopoly in Britain

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was slower than it was in Germany, as if these are points that Lenin had overlooked and which if he had known might have caused him to modify his analysis. But these very points are mentioned by Lenin in *Imperialism*.

Britain and Finance Capital

Nowhere does Lenin say that the fusion of banking and industrial capital into finance capital which he described so minutely in relation to Germany, was taking place, in exactly the same way, in other imperialist countries, but that in all of them in one way or another the growth of monopolies and the drawing together of bank and industrial capital was taking place. Surely James Harvey is not going to contend that Britain, the foremost state in the export of capital, the protector of the bondholders in Egypt and the mineowners in South Africa, had not reached the finance capitalist stage. At the same time it had played the foremost part in the territorial division of the world between the great powers and in the formation of international capitalist monopolies, in an attempt to share world markets. Yet in defiance of history, one of the underlying themes of Mr. Barratt Brown is that in 1916 Britain was not a fully fledged monopoly capitalist imperialist power.

Export of Capital

The fact that slightly less than half of British overseas investments were in the Empire is regarded by Barratt Brown and James Harvey as requiring a modification of Lenin's theory of imperialism. We wonder why. The same thing applied with still greater force to Germany and France and their colonies—a fact noted in passing by the "perceptive" Lenin. Britain, however, had a very much higher proportion of its overseas investments in its Empire than had any of the other capitalist states, and a great deal of the remainder was in the then British "sphere of influence" in South America.

In writing of imperialism all writers before the First World War designated as colonies all the countries of the Empire, whether self-governing or otherwise. So Lenin was simply following current practice when he wrote "the principal spheres of investment of British capital are the British colonies which are very large in America (for example, Canada) as well as in Asia". Table V of Mr. Barratt Brown's book tells us that in 1911-13 the overseas investment of British capital was distributed as follows—in the Empire as a whole 46 per cent. Of this 30 per cent was in the Dominions, 10.5 per cent in India and 2.5 per cent in America. No other imperialist power had such a large proportion of its overseas investment in its Empire. So the above quoted statement of Lenin was not as far out as J.H. thinks. Incidentally, alongside that statement there is a table showing the geographical distribution of Britain's overseas investments which shows that Lenin knew approximately where they were and was in little need of correction by anyone.

The peculiar suggestion of Mr. Barratt Brown, echoed by Comrade Harvey, that while the income arising from the non-self-governing colonies can be classed as "tribute", that wrung from the self-governing but relatively under-developed ones does not, has no foundation in logic or history. I doubt if it would be endorsed by any Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders who know the history of their country. What this peculiar argument is designed to do except to diminish the estimates of the tribute drawn by the British imperialists from their *economically* dependent colonies I do not know.

The Tribute Theory

Before we discuss what James Harvey calls the "tribute theory" let us recall what Lenin wrote in his 1920 preface to *Imperialism*. After pointing out how a handful of very rich and powerful states were plundering the whole world he said:

> "Obviously out of such enormous *super-profits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their 'home' country), it is quite *possible* to *bribe* the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And the capitalists of the 'advanced' countries are bribing them; they bribe them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert" (Lenin's italics).

How does Mr. Barratt Brown deal with this? Does he deny that such super-profit exists? On the contrary he tells us (p. 99) that the income from overseas investments in 1913 was "perhaps a quarter of all property incomes"—surely a very big supplement to the profits extracted from the workers at home (much of which was realised in the process of Empire trade).

Mr. Barratt Brown replies that only about one-sixth of this sum came from India and the other dependent colonies. "The very much greater part came from other developing industrial lands, the United States, European countries and the independent British Dominions." Again we have the trick of dismissing the tribute drawn from the Empire by excluding that drawn from the Dominions. Nevertheless, the fact remains that "the tribute"—one-fourth of all property income—was enormous and more than enabled the

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British bourgeoisie to do what Lenin said it did. (The narrowing of the tribute from India to "investment income" grossly underestimates the amount drawn from that land. One has to add other sources, notably the remittances representing savings from salaries, sent home by the British bureaucracies and military forces from India.)

Two Sources of Income

So it amounts to this. The British bourgeoisie was in receipt of tribute from abroad, which was at least equal to one quarter of its entire income. It had two sources of income, not one. This extra income enabled it in contrast to less favoured bourgeoisie elsewhere to win over and corrupt working-class leaders and to make, where under pressure, concessions to certain sections of the working class. It did so in virtue of its greater resources. It is, therefore, ludicrous to do as James Harvey does and ask us to forget all about "the tribute", to treat it in fact as non-existent, and to boldly assert that any concessions given came from increased productivity. You cannot by resorting to such procedure, brush aside the fact that, in the past (we are not analysing the situation in 1964), the British bourgeoisie in virtue of its foreign income on top of its home produced profits was able to make concessions and to corrupt, to a greater extent than a bourgeoisie which only had similar productive capacity at home, would have been able to do.

We cannot understand what the militancy of the British workers before 1914 is meant to prove. The extent of the "tribute" is admitted. If the argument is that the bourgeoisie had not succeeded in corrupting *all* the workers, neither Lenin nor anyone else said that it had. H. A. Hobson noted, however, that in certain areas, which he designated as the "metal and shipbuilding centres", the Government's dispensation of arms and naval orders reconciled sections of the top strata of the working class to imperialism. Birmingham changed from being a centre of radicalism to a centre of Toryism.

The study of the great wave of Labour unrest in the years from 1911 to 1914 shows that (1) it was those sections of the workers who had been "left out in the cold", namely seamen, dockers, all kinds of transport workers, miners and railwaymen who led the struggle, the craft unions standing in the main aloof and (2) that the striking workers did so in many cases in spite of the corrupted trade union and Labour Party leaders.

It is, therefore, a pity that Mr. Barratt Brown's "useful and carefully presented statistics" were not accompanied by a better understanding of what Lenin wrote about imperialism, and a deeper knowledge of the pre-1914 period. It would have prevented many half-baked theories from being elaborated, and besides diminishing his bias against the socialist world, might have made his conclusions a lot more realistic than they are.

What is Television?

"Cadmus"

BERT BAKER'S article on *What is Television?* is especially welcome, because it deliberately poses questions without attempting the slick answers that have been found in other journals; may I in the same spirit add some further factors, and stress others that I consider he has not emphasised enough?

TV and Cinema

In my view it is unlikely that television will become an art in its own right in the sense that it will have its own separate traditions, different audiences and always distinctive programme producers. TV is a form of mass entertainment that is growing in a world of other mass entertainments, the main one of which is the cinema; there is likely to be much interplay between TV and the cinema, but because TV tends to have a more immediate, global nature, the national characteristics may get a bit blurred. This contrasts with the development of the cinema only in some respects. Much Indian cinema, for instance, still consists of stories that burst forth into song and dance in a way unknown in the West; this is because films in India developed direct from travelling entertainers, who used this kind of presentation, whereas in Europe and America there were strong stage traditions, on which the developing cinema leaned and from which it borrowed. It has only been later that Italian neo-

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realism has influenced such Indian film-makers as Satyajit Ray.

Eisenstein's opinion that television will be able to transmit directly the *artistic* interpretation of the event *at the unrepeatable moment of its occurrence* is true, but only partly so, because there are other, technical reasons why TV will to a large extent rely on the film industry. The amount of TV material is so vast that a lot of it must be recorded in one part of the country/world at one time and transmitted in another at a later time—or several times. Magnetic tape for recording programmes has its limitations, but film has a number of technical as well as aesthetic advantages, perhaps the most important of which is the fact that a far better quality can be obtained by adopting film technique. (It is essential here to distinguish between the use of film—or magnetic tape—purely to record a programme for future use, and the use of film techniques in direction, editing, lighting and sound recording.)

This is not to say that the methods, financing and traditions of the film are being automatically superimposed on television. One of the most encouraging successes of TV has been that of documentary, which takes a different form to that in the cinema (where, anyway, it is near to dead so far as this country is concerned); but TV documentary is not a new art form. Conditions on TV are more favourable, and so are opportunities, for, while TV has an enormous appetite for material, the cinema audiences of the world are contracting and the amount of material required for the cinema is decreasing.

Finance

The financing in television also influences the content and form of programmes. Far less money per second is spent on TV than on a cinema film, though the coming in Britain of Pay-TV will open up interesting possibilities. Until that day, all TV programme-makers will have to use their ingenuity to make the best use of comparatively slender budgets. This factor perhaps is the one that explains how Westerns, which are few and far between these days in the cinema, still continue in the old form on TV—because they are cheap to produce, and can be produced in the same way as a butcher makes sausages. But, if one is looking for a type of programme that may survive these early days of TV, one should also include some of the more realistic open-air films such as *Naked City,* a fine American police series; what marks this out from many others is the combination of professionalism in style and treatment with stories that have depth and quite a lot of social content.

Series, generally, are part of the developing tradition of TV, but even some of these are a throw-back to the early days of the cinema.

Immediacy

Much is made of the value of the immediacy of TV, and for some TV material this will probably always be true. The assassination of President Kennedy illustrates the way a nation—indeed, large sections of the globe—can come together and simultaneously experience an event in a way no other medium can achieve. But I question the suggestion that this will apply for all time to all TV programmes. I wonder whether the "presence" of TV, which Bert Baker believes to be inherent in the nature of TV, will wear thin. In the very early days of the cinema the "main attraction" might consist of one scene of a train coming into a station, and audiences in those days, when movies were a novelty, tended to duck their heads, believing momentarily that a train was actually coming into the hall where they were sitting. Cinema audiences no longer react like that (except, perhaps, at Cinerama), though one does still put oneself into the situation that one is watching on the silver screen; the dim lights in the cinema auditorium help to concentrate one's attention on the screen. The less formal, even chatty, atmosphere of home television viewing militates against this, so I wonder whether (except for news and current events) in a few years' time people will really care whether Ena Sharples and Elsie Tanner of *Coronation Street* are actually having a row at this very moment, or whether Ray Martine happens right now gaggingly to be introducing the next singer on *Stars and Garters.* (Note for those who read this letter in ten years' time: It doesn't matter who Sharples, Tanner and Martine were—they all had earthy qualities that gave them mass appeal.)

However, in conditions of viewing, where distraction is only too easy (even if there are no commercials to break the thread), television has a more difficult job to hold attention, and this is bound to affect content.

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What does Music Mean?

L. Diamant

IT is obvious from the quotations that have appeared in these articles that some contemporary composers are even less eloquent at putting into words what they seem incapable of putting into their music. Many of their statements are of no use whatever in a Marxist discussion on the meaning of music. Is it not time that we stopped this rather unrevealing picking of other people's brains, even those of well-known composers, and got down to fundamentals and some original thought about music?

Just what is it that attracts us to the basic classical repertoire of the concert hall and recital room and endears these works to millions of music lovers throughout the world? If one considers the great diversity of styles found in these works it is soon apparent that it cannot be any wholly musical quality that forms the common link that joins them in popular esteem, so it must be some extra-musical association which they all share in some degree. I would suggest that this common link is the expression through music of what, for lack of a better term, may be called humanity—those feelings, emotions and reactions to life and environment which we know from our own experience, or are capable of experiencing, or which through music, and through music alone, can be simulated to an uncanny extent heightening our own perception and bringing us close to a realisation of the composer's experience and reactions.

Expression of Humanity

This expression of humanity is at once the prime function of music as a social art and the obvious explanation for the continuing popularity of the standard classical repertoire, for it runs through all great music from whatever period in history. It is only the wilful exclusion of human feeling from the works of some composers over the last fifty years that has led to what is perfectly correctly termed anti-music and which itself derives from the essential inhumanity of much of our decaying capitalist society which has ravaged the world with wars and fascism—the music of the damned.

What are these experiences of humanity that music can express so eloquently? They are the almost infinite shades of human feeling in relation to life's happenings and man's environment to which we are all sensitive. It will help us to consider their nature if we merely list a number for which any music lover should be able to recall musical examples without much difficulty:

Vigour	Purity
Strength	Simplicity
Power	Innocence
Determination	Contemplation
Implacability	Resignation
Struggle	Unanimity
Ferocity	Tenderness
Harshness	Love
Barbarity	Elegance
Destruction	Delicacy
Confusion	Calm
Chaos	Order
Grimness	Humour
Eerieness	Blissfulness
Maliciousness	Exaltation
Malevolence	Compassion
Evil	Geniality
Terror	Warmth
Horror	Passion
Bleakness	Adoration
Isolation	Joy
Gloom	Hope
Despair	Longing
Grief	Relief
Pain	Ecstasy
Anguish	Grandeur
Uneasiness	Vastness
Excitement	Striving
Argument	Youthfulness
Discussion	Growth
Pomposity	Brilliance

These are just some of the experiences presented in non-descriptive, purely instrumental music—chamber music, symphonies, concerti and so on. The evocation of such feelings, emotions and reactions is the very stuff of music, the basis of the language of music through which complex thoughts and ideas may be expressed and developed. Without them music becomes mere formalistic and sterile note-spinning of little more than technical interest to other musicians.

Melody, harmony, rhythm, tempo, timbre, dynamics and texture are combined by composers in a complex interweaving of strands of human feelings and reactions, complementing and contrasting with each other and expressing the infinite richness of life. Thus the blazing integrity of Beethoven's music has shown for all time man's

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striving for freedom in his expression of the ideals of the French Revolution in musical terms, but he also expresses the pain and anguish of deep sorrow, the boisterousness of joy, the warm geniality of human relationships, the passionate longing for peace that are the timeless experience of men. Carl Nielsen, the Danish composer, in his Fifth Symphony confronts order with chaos in ferocious conflict and the ultimate triumph of order carries us along by the conviction and sincerity with which it is stated by the music.

With music, as with all art, our understanding is enhanced by such knowledge as we ourselves are able to bring to bear in relation to it, and in this context technical knowledge is perhaps the least important. The placing of a composer in historical context, a knowledge of his life and character, of the conditions of the time and especially of the period in which any work was composed—all these can help us to deeper and fuller understanding of the music. So it is with the Nielsen Symphony; mere technical analysis, the delight of some programme annotators, gets us nowhere if we do not know something of Nielsen the man, and that his Fifth Symphony was composed between 1920 and 1922 and may be considered as the reflections of a citizen of a non-belligerent country on the catastrophe of the First World War. The moment we apply historical materialist method to music or to any art we have found the key to its meaning and to the understanding of it.

Music and Nationalism

The relationship of music to nationalism is an interesting one. It is just as ridiculous to believe that all nationalist music is necessarily good as it is to believe that all non-nationalist or internationalist music is bad. There is plenty of nationalist music that is empty, pompous, jingoistic and even boring. There are, too, undoubted masterpieces that can lay little claim to nationalist inspiration, of which Nielsen's Fifth Symphony is undoubtedly one, as are other contemporary works such as, say, Walton's First Symphony, Bloch's Piano Quintet and his string quartets, Rawsthorne's First Piano Concerto and the young Polish composer, Penderecki's "Tren" for strings. Of course, in recent years the research of musicologists has turned to proving the links between the masters of the past and folksong, thus in a sense showing that nearly all composers are nationalists to a degree—although perhaps only musicologists are really aware of this. More significantly, Bartok has shown that there is a clear connection between speech rhythms and inflections and those found in folk music, and Frank Howes, in his book *Man, Mind and Music*, expanded this idea further, pointing that this influence can be found in other music than folksongs and folk dances.

All the leading nationalist composers of both past and present, e.g., Mussorgski, Dvorak, Tchaikovski, Verdi, Falla, Vaughan Williams, Bartok, Copland and Shostakovich, demonstrate a fundamental dialectical truth, for from the very nationalism of their Russian, Slavonic, Italian, Spanish, English, Hungarian and American music they attain a universality that makes their music understood and loved by peoples of other nationalities who may know comparatively little of the music's country of origin but are able to react immediately to the rich humanity of it. So we see that music inspired by nationalism may, in the hands of genius, undergo a qualitative change and burst its boundaries to achieve universal significance. In our time Bela Bartok, whose life was so intimately bound up with Hungarian folksong, is especially outstanding in this way.

Thus we have seen that the common factor in music that is universally accepted, acclaimed and cherished as great, is its humanity. It is quite irrelevant whether such music is modal, tonal, polytonal or dodecaphonic, whether it is national or international in style, or whether it is vocal, choral, instrumental, chamber or orchestral music, provided that it is in the idiom of its period. If it is lacking in humanity it will be formalist and lacking in interest however brilliantly it may be contrived. We are able to come to terms with music that has human content and can understand it more fully if we adopt an historical approach, relating the music to its time and place of composition and to the life and personality of its composer. If the composer shows sincerity, integrity and conviction the meaning of his music should then be clear, and its success or failure are then dependent on the depth of his perception and his genius for expressing this in musical terms.

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U. all depts.) Aldenham, Herts.

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